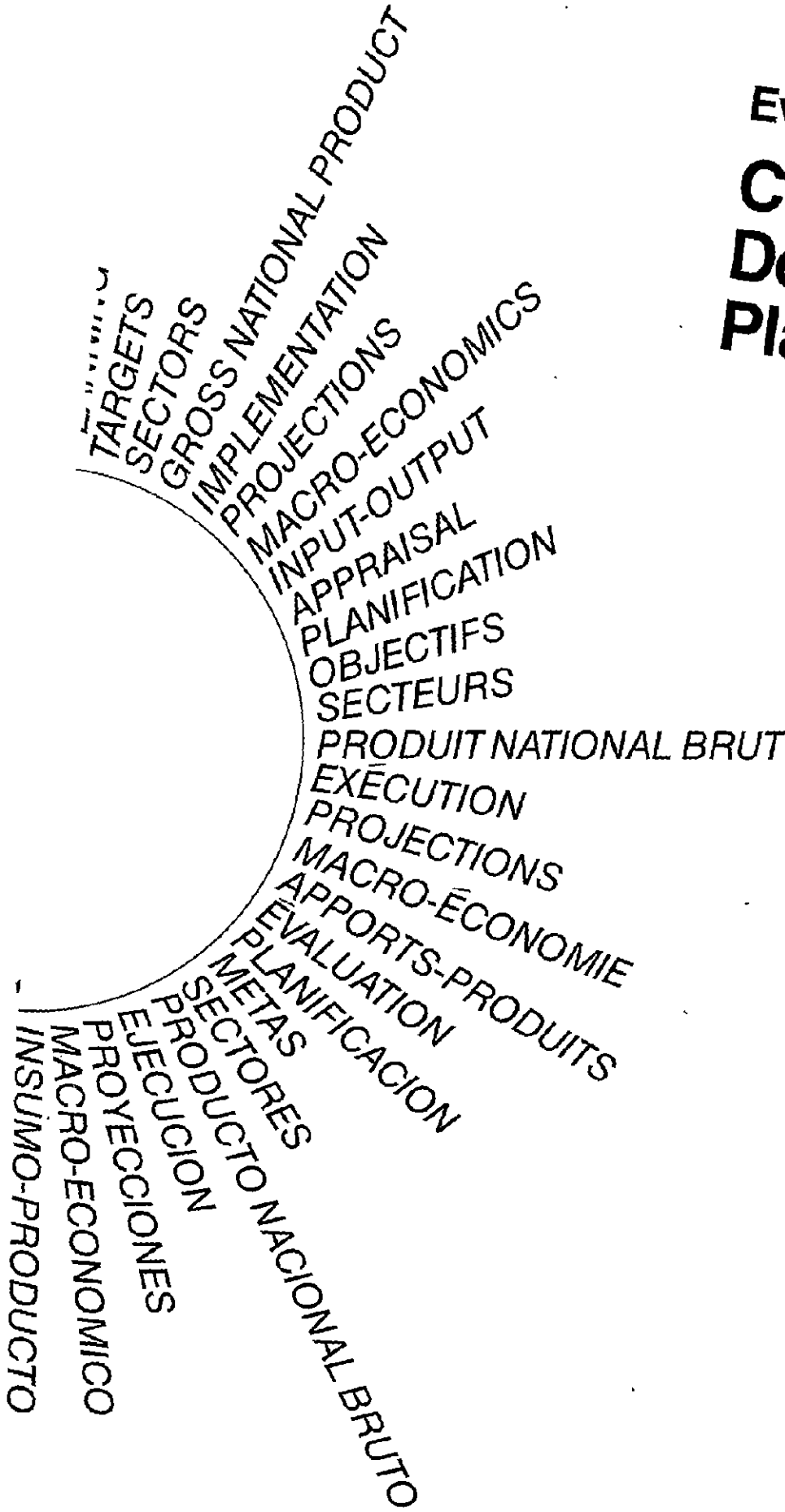
Evaluation Study No.1

Comprehensive Development Planning



REPORT ON THE JOINT UN/IBRD/UNDP EVALUATION STUDY ON UNDP-FINANCED TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION IN COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

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FOREWORD

The main question asked in any evaluation is: "what works, how, and why?" But, there is a further question to be raised, which transforms evaluation from a research exercise into a practical tool; "how can future work benefit from the answers?"

These are the guiding elements in the evaluation efforts of UNDP. As the world's largest multilateral programme for technical co-operation for development, working in virtually all economic and social sectors, and in multiple realms of human endeavour, the United Nations Development Programme faces especially challenging -- and potentially richly rewarding -- tasks of evaluation. Its partnership with over 150 countries developing and developed alike, and with 26 international agencies participating in the development programme, means that the range for the application of lessons learned from evaluation can be vast.

By publishing this series of evaluation study reports and giving them wide circulation, UNDP hopes to contribute not only towards enhancing the quality, relevance and effectiveness of UNDP-supported technical co-operation, but also towards enriching the general fund of knowledge about development design and execution in concept and in practice.

Evaluation of individual projects has long been a regular feature of UNDP operations. More recently, the scope of the evaluation function within UNDP has been broadened to encompass cross-country studies on specific subjects. These examine parent experience in well-established fields of technical co-operation, as well as the evolving "state of the art" in new and expanding areas.

The evaluation programme is formulated with policy guidance from the UNDP's 48-nation Governing Council. Each of the studies covers a different topic and therefore differs somewhat in approach and methodology. But all share at least two common characteristics: first, they are joint exercises of the relevant Executing Agency(ies) and of UNDP; and, second, the Governments concerned are co-operating by sharing in the preparation of the design and the result of each study.

To ensure that the experience gained and the lessons learned can be fully shared by all UN-system staff, each evaluation study will also be followed by the issuance of new operational guidelines for UNDP co-operation with Governments and Executing Agencies in the subject area. Such guidance will take the forms of one or more Programme Notes based on each study, and of the inclusion of evaluation findings in staff training programmes, seminars or workshops.

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The present report covers an issue central to the process of development -- that of Development Planning. The questions involved are far-reaching, ranging from the setting of national goals in development, to the selection of alternative strategies, and on to the techniques used in plan formulation, monitoring and evaluation. It affects potentially the whole gamut of government organizations, financial and physical resource-mobilization, and cross-sectoral impact on specific sub-regions and communities. What ultimately is at stake is the style and pace of national efforts to overcome dependence, achieve maximum self-reliance and improve the quality of life of the people.

This evaluation was carried out jointly by the World Bank, the United Nations (the principal Executing Agency) and UNDP. The findings and conclusions of the study have been reflected in a Programme Note on Development Planning which has already been issued as guidance for UNDP and UN system staff.

Bradford Morse, Administrator
United Nations Development Programme

REPORT ON THE JOINT UN/IBRD/UNDP EVALUATION STUDY ON UNDP-FINANCED TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION IN COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

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PREFACE - Purpose, scope and methodology of the study

1. Development planning as a rational framework for decision-making has found considerable acceptance during the last quarter-century. The United Nations system has done much to foster the growth of planning in developing countries, and UNDP has often been requested to assist Governments in establishing and strengthening the process and to develop institutional capabilities for planning. Indeed, assistance for planning forms an important part of UNDP's technical co-operation with developing countries. Yet, while the practice is now widespread and techniques are becoming increasingly sophisticated, there has been a growing disillusionment with it as an instrument for accelerated growth and development. Furthermore, the difficulties of creating an efficient indigenous planning machinery are perhaps more severe than had been imagined.

2. The Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session in June 1977, requested the Administrator in co-operation with the Participating and Executing Agencies to "further develop existing functions of planning, appraisal and evaluation."[1/] Accordingly, a joint UNDP/Agency Evaluation Programme was drawn up, in which was included, for above-mentioned reasons, the subject of development planning. Consequently, UNDP, as the funding Agency, and the United Nations and the World Bank as the Executing Agencies, have undertaken a joint evaluation of their activities in this field.

3. The main focus of the study was institutional support for comprehensive planning at the national level. To this end, the study sought to assess the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of UNDP technical co-operation for the establishment of self-reliant central planning agencies.[2/] It was intended that the study would not only inform the Governing Council of UNDP and the Agencies involved of the direction and relevance of technical co-operation activities in this field, but also suggest various ways of making them more effective.

4. The study took planning as a technique for choosing between alternative strategies and distributing resources between competing claims in such a manner as to attain politically determined objectives. The impact on the performance of the economy and the relevance or soundness of development policies were not touched upon, these being matters to be decided upon internally in each country.

1/ E/6013/Rev.1, Page 39, paragraph 3(g), Decision of the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session.

2/ For a definition of this expression, see paragraph 110.

5. The study, which was carried out over the period from early 1977 to mid-1978, was conducted with the active participation of the World Bank, the United Nations (the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, including its Development Planning Advisory Services) and UNDP. The study comprised three main parts: first, a desk review of a quantitative analysis of all UNDP-assisted projects in planning. In the area of institution-building and direct support projects for comprehensive planning at the national level, 43 large-scale projects were selected for detailed review, and questionnaires were completed describing their characteristics, activities and achievements. The next stage consisted of a series of missions to projects in 11 countries (see Annex I). The final stage was the synthesis of the findings and conclusions reached during both the desk review and field missions.

6. This report is based on a cross-section analysis of the main findings of the missions, in the context of the broader frame of analysis obtained through the desk review of a much larger number of projects. After an introduction of an overview of UNDP-financed technical co-operation in development planning, the report concentrates on comprehensive planning, and presents the findings of the evaluation of selected projects in this field. The following issues are discussed: the design of comprehensive planning projects; their implementation; an assessment of their substantive activities; and an analysis of their contribution to institution-building with particular reference to staff development and training. The study's findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented in the final section of this report.

INTRODUCTION - AN OVERVIEW OF UNDP-FINANCED TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

7. In order to obtain an overview of the general nature of technical assistance in planning, a quantitative analysis was made of all UNDP-assisted planning projects. Particular attention was placed on the support to comprehensive planning in the context of over-all planning. Projects were analyzed, inter alia, according to the type of planning being assisted (comprehensive, sectoral, etc.); their functional purpose (institution-building, direct support, etc.) and by their distribution by region and by level of development of the host country.

8. As of June 1976, UNDP was supporting 518 projects in 110 countries and territories in the field of economic and social planning, at a cost to UNDP of $113.9 million. This represents 6.4 per cent in terms of the numbers and 5.1 per cent in terms of the value of assistance approved at that date (Table 1). Although, of course, the absolute size of the UNDP contribution to planning is not necessarily an indication of its strategic importance, the analysis does suggest that a considerably smaller proportion of UNDP resources has been allocated to strengthening the planning process in developing countries

than had been previously understood from published data.3/ Indeed, the present system for classifying projects gives misleading information. Modifications to the definitions of the different categories in the classification system are essential if UNDP wishes to have reliable and accurate information on its support to planning projects.

9. Over three-quarters of the 147 countries and territories at all levels of economic development receiving assistance from UNDP in mid-1976 allocated some part of their IPFs to economic and social planning. Countries with a per capita gross domestic product of less than $400 allocated to planning an average of $800,000, whereas countries with a higher per capita gross domestic product allocated approximately half this amount: the variation in the figures reflects perhaps the different stages of development of the administrative and planning machinery. One-half of these countries allocated to planning less than 3 per cent of the value of the assistance from UNDP; nearly one-third of all countries, particularly those in Africa and some of the small island economies, allocated more than 6 per cent.4/

10. There were considerable differences in the proportion of funds allocated to planning at the national level amongst the four regions - from as much as 5.5 per cent in Latin America to 2.8 per cent in Europe, Mediterranean and the Middle East: data for the allocation of funds to planning at the country and regional level are presented in Table 1. Over one-third of UNDP's contribution to planning is allocated to projects in Africa, and over a quarter in Latin America: less than 20 per cent was allocated to projects in the other two regions. Over 11 per cent of regional funds were allocated to planning activities, representing support for the regional institutes for planning and for integration and co-operation efforts among developing countries. Thus, UNDP was co-operating with a large number of countries in strengthening aspects of the process and machinery for planning at the sub-national, national and multinational levels: this co-operation tended to be concentrated in countries at the lower end of the income scale.

3/ According to Compendium No. 7, UNDP was supporting, in June 1976, 1,040 projects at a cost to UNDP of $251 million in the field of "general economic and social planning" (ACC classification, category 20). The difference stems mainly from three factors: the present study excluded public and financial administration and statistics, as well as other projects not considered as development planning proper, but covered under category 20, and it included sector planning projects covered elsewhere in the classification.

4/ The percentages in paragraphs 9 and 10 refer to the ratio between the UNDP contributions to on-going planning projects and to all other projects, unless otherwise specified.

Table 1 - UNDP-assisted planning projects and all projects, by country (per capita GDP) inter-country and by UNDP geographical region[a/]

(in numbers, millions of $ and percentages)

	Planning Projects[b/]				All Projects[b/]		Planning Projects as % of all projects	
	No.	%	$m	%	No.	$m	No.	$
TOTAL	518		113.9		8 018	2 216.0	6.5	5.1
A. COUNTRY/INTER-COUNTRY								
Total country projects	462		84.0		7 201	1 892.7	6.4	4.4
Least Developed Countries (28 countries)	117	25.3	22.1	26.3				
Countries with p.c. GDP less than $400 (36 countries excluding LDCs)	146	31.6	29.0	34.5	2 140	619.8	6.8	4.7
Countries with p.c. GDP more than $400 (83 countries)	199	43.1	32.9	39.2	3 329	797.5	6.0	4.1
Regional Projects	56	-	29.9	-	680	268.7	8.2	11.1
Interregional and Global Projects	-	-	-	-	137	54.6	-	-
B. REGION								
Africa (43 countries and territories)	146	28.2	38.3	33.6	2 316	689.1	6.3	5.6
Asia and the Pacific (32)	132	25.5	22.6	19.8	2 177	564.5	6.1	4.0
Europe, Mediterranean and the Middle East[c/] (32)	79	15.2	20.3	17.9	1 718	434.8	4.6	4.7
Latin America and the Caribbean (40)	161	31.1	32.7	28.7	1 670	473.0	9.6	6.9
Interregional and Global	-	-	-	-	137	54.6	-	-

a/ Source for this and all subsequent tables: MIS Compendium No. 7, June 1976.

b/ The Compendium lists the stock of all projects approved as of June 1976, including those for which field work may have been completed but for which the accounts have not been formally closed. All projects are listed, including the very large number (over two-thirds) of all projects to which the UNDP contribution is below $150,000; the actual number of large, long duration projects is comparatively small (see also paragraph 16).

c/ i.e., the area covered by the Regional Bureau for Europe, Mediterranean and the Middle East (BEMME) prior to the establishment of the Regional Bureau for Arab States and the Unit for Europe. Over 95% of the value of the UNDP contribution was allocated to projects in the Arab countries: consequently, data for "Europe, Mediterranean and the Middle East" may be taken to refer in large measure to the area covered by the Regional Bureau for Arab States.

11. UNDP is co-operating with governments in a wide variety of different planning activities, of which comprehensive planning at the national level was one of the more important (Table 2). Comprehensive planning projects were typically concerned with preparing short-medium- (a common feature) and long-term plans; identifying and appraising projects, and the subsequent monitoring of their implementation; and advising on a variety of policy issues of concern to the central planning agency. Since such projects generally represented the initial stages in developing the planning machinery, particularly by providing institutional support for techniques and procedures for over-all planning, they were particularly important for those countries - as in Africa - which needed support in planning over a sustained period of time. Because of their multi-purpose character and long duration of four-five years, these projects represented over one-quarter of the value of all UNDP support to planning and nearly 40 per cent of the value of activities at the country level.

Table 2 - UNDP-assisted planning projects, by type and purpose

	Value of UNDP Contribution		No. of Projects	
	$m.	%	No.	%
A. Type of Planning	113.9	100.0	518	100.0
Comprehensive planning	32.3	28.4	161	31.0
Sectoral planning[a/]	41.8	36.7	256	49.4
Subnational (regional) planning	10.1	8.8	46	8.9
Regional institutes for planning	14.2	12.5	7	1.4
Planning for intercountry co-operation	15.5	13.6	48	9.3
B. Purpose[b/]	113.9	100.0	518	100.0
Institution-building	64.9	57.0	101	19.5
Direct support	46.2	40.5	314	60.6
Direct training	1.9	1.7	100	19.3
Model-building and methodologies	.9	.8	3	.6

[a/] Planning undertaken by executive ministries.

[b/] These functional categories are not mutually exclusive, since for example, a certain number of 'typical' direct support type activities might be undertaken in institution-building projects and both institution-building and direct support projects include provision for fellowships and other forms of direct training.

12. The widening of the process to cover sectoral planning and subnational planning by executive ministries and regional departments often takes place after the over-all planning effort is more firmly established, as appears to be the case for Latin America and Asia and the Pacific and generally in countries at a higher level of development (Table 3). It should be noted, however, that the data for sectoral and subnational (regional) planning do not reflect the real extent of UNDP's support for these types of planning, since comprehensive planning projects also often include sectoral and regional planning components.

Table 3 - UNDP-assisted planning projects (in-country): by type, and per capita GDP

	Least Developed countries (28)[a]		Countries and territories with p.c. GDP of less than $400 other than LDCs (36)[a]		Countries and territories with p.c. GDP of more than $400 (83)[a]		Total (147)	
	$m.	%	$m.	%	$m.	%	$m.	%
Comprehensive planning	9.7	43.9	11.4	39.3	11.2	34.2	32.3	38.5
Sectoral planning	11.2	50.7	12.0	41.4	18.5	56.4	41.7	49.7
Subnational regional planning	1.2	5.4	5.6	19.3	3.1	9.4	9.9	11.8
Total	22.1	100.0	29.0	100.0	32.8	100.0	83.9	100.0

[a] Number of countries in each group.

13. Planning projects for individual sectors have much the same objectives as comprehensive projects have for the whole economy. In aggregate terms, support for sectoral planning is greater than that for comprehensive planning, but this includes all sectors, the main ones being agriculture, education, industry and manpower (in that order). The distribution of sector planning projects by region suggests that agricultural planning was of importance in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America, educational and manpower planning in Africa, the Arab region and Latin America, and industrial planning in Asia and Latin America (Table 4).

Table 4 - UNDP-assisted sectoral planning projects

Region	Agriculture	Education	$m. Industry	Manpower	Other Sectors[a/]	Total
Africa	2.9	4.3	1.7	1.5	2.2	12.6
Asia and the Pacific	2.6	1.0	2.4	1.4	3.0	10.4
Europe, Mediterranean and the Middle East	.2	2.3	.9	.5	.9	4.8
Latin America	3.5	1.5	1.8	2.9	4.3	14.0
Total	9.2	9.1	6.8	6.3	10.4	41.8

a/ Health, natural resources, tourism, transport and communication.

/...

14. Regional (subnational) planning is the smallest category of country projects in terms of value. The main activities in this field include the regionalizing of the national planning efforts and preparing plans for the development of particular regions of the country.

15. Two different types of planning activities are being supported from the regional (inter-country) programmes. The first covers the support to the four regional institutions for planning, namely the Asian Development Institute (ADI) in Thailand; the Arab Institute for Economic and Social Planning (AIESP) in Kuwait; the Institute for Development Economics and Planning (IDEP) in Senegal; and the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) in Chile. These four institutes, in their different ways, contribute to the development of planning in their respective regions. Intercountry planning, the last category, constitutes support - mainly in the form of advisory services - to the planning of regional integration and co-operation. This type of planning is an important, and growing, feature of UNDP's assistance to developing countries and is particularly significant in Latin America. It includes such activities as identifying opportunities for greater multi-country co-operation, widening and deepening the integration process, and assisting in negotiations within the integration group. Most of the UNDP-assisted projects in this area are attached to the secretariats of the co-operation and integration movements.

16. The distribution of projects by region and by type of planning is summarized in Table 5. This shows, in particular, first the importance of comprehensive planning projects in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and in the Arab region. Second, a major share of UNDP's assistance to planning, especially in Asia and Latin America, is devoted to the building-up of sector planning activities. And third, allocations for regional planning at the national and subnational level are quite important in Asia and the Pacific and Latin America, but of relatively less importance in the other two regions.

Table 5 - Distribution of value of UNDP contribution to planning projects

A. By Geographical Region (%)

	Comprehensive planning	Sector planning	Subnational (regional) planning
Africa	47	30	24
Asia and the Pacific	20	25	37
Europe, Mediterranean and the Middle East	18	12	5
Latin America	15	33	34
Total	100	100	100

B. By type of planning (%)

	Africa	Asia and the Pacific	Europe, Mediterranean and the Middle East	Latin America
Comprehensive planning	50	31	52	22
Sectoral planning	42	51	44	62
Subnational (regional) planning	8	18	4	16
Total	100	100	100	100

17. Projects were also classified[5/] according to their functional purpose, namely institution-building (strengthening the capability and competence of the planning agencies); direct support (carrying out discrete planning activities, such as preparing programmes and projects, sector studies and specific technical documents); and direct training (fellowships and seminars).

18. Institution-building projects are generally long and multi-purpose; nearly two-thirds of the experts in planning financed by UNDP work in such projects. Direct support projects tend to be shorter, often single purpose and carried out by a smaller number of international staff. Direct training projects often comprise single fellowships or seminars and are therefore small in size. The study confirmed these definitions. Institution-building projects, which have an average size of $642,000, absorbed nearly 60 per cent of the value of the UNDP contribution, but represented less than 20 per cent of the number of projects (Table 2). A large share of all institution-building projects is found in those countries where the planning offices have only recently been established and where the planning process needs strengthening in a variety of different areas. For example, nearly 70 per cent of UNDP expenditures in planning projects in Africa is devoted to institution-building: corresponding figures for Latin America and Asia and the Pacific are 58 per cent and 40 per cent. In contrast, direct support projects are much smaller, averaging about $147,000 each, and absorbing 40 per cent of the value of the total UNDP contribution. Such projects are found more frequently in countries with a relatively well-established planning office, which require assistance in specific areas for a shorter period. This is particularly the case for certain comprehensive and sectoral planning projects in Latin America and Asia and the Pacific. Direct support projects can also be of importance in Africa and in the least developed countries in the Arab region and in Asia and the Pacific, when a specific planning task is to be carried out and when governments assign the entire job to a UNDP-assisted project. But if so, they often comprise the initial stage of a longer term institution-building project.

19. Planning projects assisted by UNDP vary greatly in size, as do all UNDP-assisted projects. Over two-thirds of all planning projects absorb only about 16 per cent of the value of UNDP's total contribution, while over one-third of the total contribution is allocated to only 4 per cent of all projects (Table 6). More specifically, there were 163 projects (out of the total of 518) with a UNDP contribution greater than $150,000, absorbing $95.0m (out of a total value of $113.9m). For example, of the 161 projects classified as comprehensive planning (see Table 2) only about one-third receive a contribution from UNDP greater than $150,000. The average size of a UNDP-assisted planning

5/ See Chapter 3400 of the UNDP Policies and Procedures Manual.

project is $220,000, with in-country projects (comprehensive, sectoral and subnational regional planning) at or below the average, and regional (interregional) projects above the average. The typical project has a duration of about three-and-a-half years.

Table 6 - UNDP-assisted planning projects: distribution by size

	Total value of UNDP contribution		Total number of projects	
	$m.	%	No.	%
Size of UNDP Contribution				
up to $50,999	3.5	3.1	196	37.8
$51,000 $150,999	15.4	13.5	159	30.7
$151,000 $400,999	21.9	19.2	89	17.2
$401,000 $1,000,000	34.9	30.6	55	10.6
Over $1,000,000	38.2	33.6	19	3.7
Total	113.9	100.0	518	100.0

20. A total of 12 organizations were executing UNDP-assisted planning projects. Many of the Specialized Agencies were executing sectoral planning projects within their respective fields. Both the United Nations and the World Bank execute a variety of planning projects (but particularly comprehensive planning) representing 39 per cent and 12 per cent respectively of the total value of all planning projects (Table 7). Most of the projects executed directly by UNDP were in support of governments' efforts to promote inter-country economic integration and co-operation, particularly through integration groupings as in Latin America.

Table 7 - Executing Agencies for UNDP-assisted planning projects

	Comprehensive Planning Projects	Sectoral Planning Projects	Subnational Regional Planning Projects	Regional Planning Institutes and Planning for Inter-Country Co-operation	Total	
	$m.	$m.	$m.	$m.	$m.	No.
United Nations	21.6	2.6	9.2	10.7	44.1	180
World Bank	9.1	4.3	.8	-	14.2	24
UNDP	1.3	2.0	.1	12.4	15.8	47
Other[a/]	.3	32.9[b/]	-	6.6	39.8	267
Total	32.3	41.8	10.1	29.7	113.9	518

a/ ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, ITU, UNCTAD, UNIDO, AfDB, AsDB, IDB, AFESD

b/ Forty-four agricultural planning projects, totalling $8.7m. executed by FAO: 34 manpower planning projects totalling $4.7m. executed by ILO; 78 educational planning projects totalling $9.1m. executed by UNESCO; 51 industrial planning projects totalling $5.8m. executed by UNIDO and other sectoral planning projects in the areas of health, transport and communications and tourism executed by some of the agencies listed in footnote a/.

21. Planning projects are financed from both country and regional IPFs, the Special Measures Fund for Least Developed Countries and the Programme Reserve. By far the most important source of financing is the country IPF, accounting for 70 per cent of total expenditures in this field; regional IPFs provide another 26 per cent. There is little variation in the proportion of funds provided by different sources either interregionally or between the five types of planning, except with respect to projects financed from the Special Measures Fund for Least Developed Countries, which tend to be concentrated in Africa.

22. In summary, the quantitative analysis has shown that UNDP is assisting 110 countries and territories in planning, and that this assistance tends to be concentrated in countries at the lower end of the income scale. However, the extent of UNDP assistance to developing and strengthening the planning process in developing countries is not as large (as measured as a proportion of total UNDP assistance) as had been previously understood from published data. The analysis has also shown that:

- about one-third of the UNDP contribution to planning projects is in Africa (concentrated in comprehensive planning), twenty-nine per cent in Latin America (concentrated in sectoral planning and inter-country integration planning) and the remainder in the other two regions;

- the broad category of sectoral planning receives the largest amount of UNDP resources in aggregate terms; comprehensive planning, however, is the single most important type of planning currently supported by UNDP, followed by assistance to planning of inter-country integration movements, the regional institutes for planning, regional (subnational) planning and sectoral planning;

- almost 60 per cent of the value and 20 per cent of the number of planning projects are considered to be institution-building projects, nearly all the rest being direct-support (40 per cent of the value and 60 per cent of the number) and direct-training projects;

- the United Nations (39 per cent), UNDP (14 per cent) and the World Bank (13 per cent) execute most planning projects; the remainder are executed by the Specialized Agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system which undertake sectoral planning projects in their respective fields.

EVALUATION OF UNDP-ASSISTED TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION IN COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

23. As described in the preface to this report, the study focussed upon institution-building projects for comprehensive planning at the national level. Such projects are of critical importance to governments in their efforts to strengthen the process and machinery for planning, and as the quantitative analysis has shown, UNDP co-operation in this endeavour is a major feature of over-all assistance in the field of development planning.

24. Of the total of 518 planning projects being financed by UNDP in mid-1976, 161 may be regarded as falling within the area of comprehensive planning, with the type and range of activities described in paragraph 11 above. By means of desk reviews and field missions, the study examined a number of features of these projects, from the experience of governments, executing agencies and UNDP in their design and implementation.

25. The methodology and procedures followed by the study may be briefly summarized. After a statistical review of the group of 161 projects, 43 projects in 34 countries in the field of comprehensive planning were selected for intensive desk review. This sample was designed to concentrate on large-scale institution-building projects and to have approximately the same proportional distribution of projects by region and executing agency as characterized the larger group of UNDP-assisted projects in this field.6/ Questionnaires regarding these projects were completed by the appropriate UNDP field offices: the information provided by the field offices was particularly helpful in the further analysis of this group of projects.7/

26. After the desk review of these comprehensive planning projects, field visits were undertaken to eleven of them. A combination of factors determined the selection: (a) the need for a balance between the different regions and types of planning; (b) an adequate number of countries at different levels of development; (c) projects with large-scale assistance far advanced in implementation or recently completed; (d) execution by different agencies and by different methods; and (e) projects incorporating interesting features, such as the absence of an international project manager or the extensive use of short-term consultants.

27. The general characteristics of UNDP support for comprehensive planning mirror those of co-operation in other types of planning described in the Introduction. As suggested there, institution-building projects in comprehensive planning are concentrated in those countries that need support in planning over a sustained period of time, notably in Africa and in the least developed

6/ Many of the 161 projects identified as comprehensive planning projects comprised only one fellowship or one international expert; such small projects were not considered for inclusion in the sample to be studied in more detail, thus reducing the universe of projects from which the sample was selected.

7/ Annex I lists the projects reviewed and visited during the course of this phase of the study. Annex II contains the copy of the questionnaire completed by the field office.

countries in other regions of the world (Table 8). For example, 47 per cent of the value of UNDP's contribution to comprehensive planning is to be found in Africa, compared with an African share of 34 per cent of total UNDP support for all types of planning. Moreover, comprehensive planning projects in Africa are much larger than similar projects in other regions. Nearly three-quarters of all comprehensive planning projects were executed by the United Nations, the balance by the World Bank and UNDP itself; World Bank-executed projects were over three times the average size of a UN-executed project, a ratio determined primarily because of the large number of small direct support and direct training projects executed by the United Nations.

Table 8 - UNDP-assisted comprehensive planning projects, by region, per capita GDP, function and executing agency

	UNDP Contribution		Projects	
	$000	%	Number	%
Total	32,331	100.0	161	100.0
A. By Region				
Africa	15,102	46.7	48	29.8
Asia-Pacific	6,509	20.1	40	24.8
Arab region	5,723	17.6	29	18.0
Latin America	4,997	15.5	44	27.3
B. Per capita GDP				
Least Developed Countries	9,704	30.0	39	24.2
Countries with p.c. GDP less than $400	11,377	35.2	43	26.7
Countries with p.c. GDP more than $400	11,250	34.8	79	49.1
C. By Function				
Institution-building	19,778	61.3	36	22.4
Direct support	11,224	34.7	88	54.7
Direct training	388	1.2	34	21.1
Others	941	2.8	3	1.9
D. Executing Agencies				
UN	21,562	66.9	116	72.0
IBRD	9,175	28.5	15	9.3
UNDP	1,341	4.0	23	14.3
Others	253	0.7	7	4.3

28. The smaller sample of 43[8/] comprehensive planning projects (at a cost to UNDP of about $19.0m) includes all the institution-building projects and several of the direct-support projects. Of these forty-three projects, 21 are located in Africa[9/] (an indication of the importance of this type of project to that region), eight in Latin America and seven in each of the Arab and Asia and the Pacific regions. Further aspects of these projects are discussed in the subsequent sections of this report.

A. The Design of the Projects

29. Most of the samples of comprehensive planning projects assisted by UNDP were multi-disciplinary, involving teams of experts and expected to last four-five years. These projects were expected to cover a broad range of activities: to advise and assist in preparing a medium-term plan; in introducing annual planning; in co-ordinating national, regional and sectoral planning; in strengthening the process of project preparation, appraisal and monitoring; in formulating policies, and in providing training in these and other areas. Some projects were addressed to a relatively specific need - institutionalizing the process of annual planning in Ecuador, for example; or strengthening of the system of project planning in Benin. One project assisted the Government of Syria in establishing a permanent institute for training planners and in creating a capacity within this institute for the provision of consultancy and research services. Another project consisted entirely of short-term consultants to the Korean Economic Planning Board to provide advice to the government on a variety of planning and programming issues. However, the majority of the projects assisted by UNDP were concerned with a broad range of issues as described above and as discussed in section C below.

30. The evaluation study has shown the critical importance of sound project design as a key element in attaining the project's objectives. It was at the design stage that the objectives should have been identified, the activities spelt out, and the amount, composition and phasing of resources determined. An assessment of the soundness of project design therefore rests upon three factors: first, the relevance of the project to the actual needs of the national planning process and the central planning agency; second, its internal consistency in terms of the resources and time provided to carry out the activities, produce the outputs, and attain the objectives; and third, the manner in which resources were deployed in order to attain the basic objective of a self-reliant planning office. These various issues are discussed in turn.

8/ This includes the first and second phases of projects in seven countries.

9/ The basic desk work of the study was undertaken in early 1977 utilising data as of June 1976. A more recent review of the latest UNDP Country Programme Management Plans in Africa has shown the number of large-scale institution-building projects in Africa in the area of comprehensive planning to be 15, a slight reduction from the 21 in mid-1976 (the latter, however, included three Phase II projects).

31. The objectives and activities of practically all the projects were addressed to a real need. The central planning agencies needed strengthening from a technical point of view, both to carry out their functions in the short term and to attain self-reliance in the long run, the latter in the sense of being able not to depend upon long-term and comprehensive technical assistance. However, although the study would conclude that the assistance being provided by UNDP is responding to an important and real need, there are several issues that require serious consideration.

32. For example, many of the projects examined during the course of the study showed surprisingly similar characteristics in both their design and in the range of activities to be carried out. This similarity may have occurred because countries at similar levels of development often have similar needs for technical co-operation in planning. In a general sense, this is true. Nevertheless, the skill composition of the international personnel followed a common pattern, despite the different deficiencies and weaknesses in the planning process (for example, a need for improved fiscal control in some countries or a premature emphasis on regional/decentralized planning or limited capacity for project preparation in others). Even though different countries may be undertaking similar types of planning (commonly medium-term indicative planning in a mixed economy) it does not necessarily follow that the skill requirements are the same or that UNDP co-operation should be directed to the same specific issues. Almost all projects included at least one post in general economic planning, but with no particular specialization. A large proportion of the projects contained posts in both agricultural and industrial planning, with the balance in one or more of the areas of regional (subnational) planning, project appraisal and monitoring, and financial planning and national accounting. The description of activities of each of the projects followed the same general lines, and there were only a few cases of a very detailed and well defined work plan based on the particular circumstances of the central planning agency. It should, however, be pointed out that some attempts were made to be more flexible and imaginative in the design of planning projects: little came of these attempts, partly because of conflicting claims of competence within the UN system and perhaps partly because of an unwillingness to try something different.

33. It would nevertheless appear that the particular requirements of the planning agency for technical co-operation from the UN system had not been studied in depth before the project was designed. The major areas in the process and machinery for planning requiring strengthening (for example, annual operational planning or improving linkages between the plan and budget or regional planning or the planning of the external sector) did not appear to have been systematically identified prior to finalizing the request for assistance and drawing up the job descriptions for the individual experts. The study did not find any evidence of an attempt to plan systematically for the skilled manpower requirements of the planning office. No manpower planning at the institutional level was carried out in any of the projects reviewed, although such an exercise had been suggested in several cases. Such an exercise might have identified the numbers and types of planning officers

required, given the type and process of planning to be introduced, on the basis of which the UNDP-assisted projects might have been designed. Without such an analysis, it is far from certain that a project relevant to the real and specific needs can be formulated: moreover the less specific the project documents regarding training and staff development, the less effective will be the contribution of the projects to institution-building.

34. The lack of a more systematic approach to the preparation of planning projects may have a number of probable explanations. First, there were limited resources (in terms of staff time and travel funds) for the purposes of project design; second, there may have been justifiable difficulties faced by the government in defining more explicitly the exact areas in the planning machinery that required attention. For example, in those countries which were in the process of clarifying the role and function of planning, it may not have been possible to determine the specific manpower requirements when the project was being prepared. Furthermore, the cumulative experience of the UN system in the field of planning is available to governments, and successful approaches in some countries can be applied to others without necessarily entailing a full-scale analysis of requirements. Nevertheless, the study would conclude that greater attention to the specific requirements for institution-building in the design of projects is indispensable for the attainment of self-reliance.

35. In some projects, the proposed objectives, outputs and activities were described with some specificity, mainly those relating to such things as the preparation of plan documents, sector studies, project appraisals, surveys of the economy, etc. These activities corresponded to the over-all work programme of the planning office, and to this extent the so-called institution-building projects were not easily distinguishable from the direct support projects. However, other projects were intentionally designed in rather general terms, in the full knowledge that the project objectives and activities would be subsequently defined in more specific terms, in the light of the experience of the first year or two of implementation. This is probably the case of projects in Asia and the Pacific and in Latin America, which were designed to last an average of less than two years, half the average duration of the projects in the other two regions.10/

10/ There was in fact considerably less regional variance in the actual duration of projects.

36. Most of the planning agencies assisted by the projects undertook planning of the standard and classical kind, as it has developed over the last 20-25 years. Formal planning - particularly in the sense of preparing multi-annual plans - was very heavily emphasized. Although the usefulness of formal planning is not denied, the weaknesses of this type of planning in many developing countries were rarely recognized. Thus, planning offices in the majority of countries assisted had difficulties in securing accurate and reliable information; the institutional and administrative framework for plan preparation and implementation was generally weak; the economies were heavily influenced by external factors; and planning for rural areas - where the majority of the population live - needed new and innovative techniques. For all these reasons, exclusive reliance on standard and over-all comprehensive planning is unlikely to be successful. To complement the standard approaches to planning, there is clearly a need for a less formal, problem-oriented and partial approach to planning, as suggested, for example, in the work of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development on a "Unified Approach to Development Analysis and Planning."[11/]

37. Furthermore although the study has noted that the comprehensive planning projects dealt with a wide range of matters, there were some important issues that tended to be neglected. For example, despite the long-term structural imbalances in a majority of countries, few of the project documents explicitly recognized the considerable external influences on domestic growth and development and consequently tended to ignore the possibilities for the planning of the external sector. Planning for science and technology was also neglected, an omission of some consequence in those high income developing countries preoccupied with choices of technologies.

38. The second major issue to be considered in the design of projects concerns the degree to which the projects may be regarded as internally consistent. With only a few limited exceptions (particularly those carrying out well-defined tasks), most projects were too ambitious, given their size and duration, and the absorptive capacity of the planning agency to which they were attached. A typical project lasted for three years, involving the provision of 3-4 international staff for a period of about 140 work-months at an average cost to UNDP of $618,000. Given these resources and the range of activities to be carried out, it is clear that the majority of projects examined (particularly those in Africa) had a set of objectives aimed at assisting the planning agency in attaining self-reliance which could not be achieved during their lifetime.

11/ Report on a Unified Approach to Development Planning, E/CN.5/519, 5 December 1974.

39. Earlier paragraphs noted the frequent discrepancy between the objectives of the projects and the ways and means for their attainment. These limitations to technical co-operation in planning may be illustrated by a general example. Much of the work of most of the planning offices assisted by UNDP involved liaison with other government departments and with the private sector. The planning office cannot effectively perform its function except in the closest possible relationship with the sector or executive ministries, the regional planning offices, the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank, and the main parastatal bodies. Indeed, for projects involving the provision of significant UNDP funds over a sustained period of time, there is much to be said for examining the development of the planning and decision-making machinery as a whole, both at the national (i.e., the central planning agency, planning units in the main executive ministries, the government financial authorities and the parastatal bodies) and at the regional level. Comprehensive planning projects might then be regarded as a vehicle for providing assistance to both the Ministry of Planning and the sector ministries: this approach is now being tried in Afghanistan with the stated objective of helping the Ministry of Planning to strengthen its links with the main executive ministries, particularly in the areas of budgeting and project preparation and monitoring.

40. As a general rule, however, the design of most planning projects assisted by UNDP assumed that the external factors affecting the relationship between the planning office and other departments of government were of little relevance to the effectiveness of the project, and/or that the project would not be able to influence them. In effect, the project documents considered that the necessary co-ordination would take place without specifying how such co-ordination might be facilitated or strengthened: the role and influence of the planning office in the over-all government structure was often taken for granted.

41. Above all, however, the design of the projects was almost uniformly deficient in the area of institution-building, and in this context, especially with respect to the development of staff capability. It is of course true that building up an institutional capability for planning is a process that takes considerable time: it is not likely to be attained during the relatively short period of a typical UNDP-assisted project. The experience of those countries with well-established planning offices clearly indicates that the process of installing and strengthening a planning capability can only take place over a sustained period, in the context of the over-all development of public administration.

42. Nevertheless, even though the development of a self-reliant planning office was (explicitly or implicitly) the principal goal of most of the projects reviewed, institution-building was only one of a number of different purposes, most of which concerned the carrying out of specific advisory and executive activities. In the great majority of cases, the measures required to build up an effective planning capability were described in a rather cursory and general manner, usually in the context of the need to train the national staff to undertake the tasks initially assigned to the international personnel. The

lack of emphasis attached to institution-building in the objectives of each project was even more pronounced in the activities which each project planned to carry out, and there was a general lack of specificity in the outputs to be produced, as for example, in the number of national staff to be trained, or the purpose and role of organizational units to be developed. Some projects which included institution-building or training as an objective did not include any activities specifically designed to meet this objective. In projects which did include such activities, the reference was often very general. Even more striking are the relatively limited resources devoted to formal training (that is, fellowships and seminars), between 6 per cent and 14 per cent of the UNDP contribution to the projects with the over-all average at 8 per cent. Such a low percentage is noteworthy, given the usually stated objective of self-reliance. Indeed one-third of the projects reviewed included no provision for formal training at all.

43. A major conclusion of the study, then, is that the process of project design needs considerable improvement and that the necessary resources should be provided for this. In particular, the specific needs of the central planning agency should be examined more systematically before determining the immediate objectives of the project and allocating resources to alternative purposes within the project. A more thorough examination of the requirements for technical co-operation would bring out the particular circumstances of the planning agency and would also reveal the possibilities for, and constraints to, institution-building and/or the need for direct support. Such an examination might comprise, initially, a review of the type and functions of planning to be introduced, developed and/or strengthened (purely indicative, completely compulsory, level of disaggregation, etc.), the level of development of the planning machinery and the identification of problem areas (a lack of capacity for project planning, for example). Next, the range and mix of skills needed to carry out the functions of planning would be identified in terms of the types, numbers and competence levels of planners required in the different disciplines (general planning, techniques of projections, project appraisal, etc.). In practice, all this would mean the preparation of a programme for attaining an indigenous planning capability, including specific activities for the development of the different institutional aspects of planning, (e.g., the capacity to draw up and implement work programmes, and staff development programmes). To the extent possible and certainly in the case of projects for which large-scale assistance is contemplated, the examination of requirements should encompass the totality of the planning machinery (including sector and regional planning, as appropriate): assistance to the central planning agency might then be viewed as a means for developing the capacity of the planning machinery as a whole. Specific activities for developing institutional capacity should become the central feature of UNDP technical co-operation projects for planning, and project objectives and outputs should specify not only the generation of skills needed in the context of the nature of the planning to be undertaken but also the other capabilities that would be established In summary, the design of projects should henceforth specify not only the different planning activities to be carried out, but also, and more importantly, define the specific measures the projects would take for developing the different institutional aspects of planning, particularly in the area of skill formation.

44. In cases where it is not possible to determine precisely the requirement for technical co-operation, project activities should start with preparatory assistance by fielding, say, a general economist/planner for a few months to assist the government in drawing up a project document based on an analysis of the requirements for skilled manpower and the particular planning activities to be strengthened. This approach is preferable to that in Asia and in Latin America, where full-scale assistance is often approved even though the projects are designed in rather general terms pending a more detailed definition of objectives and outputs at a later stage.

B. Process aspects of project implementation

45. This part of the report will concentrate on the process or delivery aspects of implementation, and will cover in turn the recruitment and fielding of the international staff of the projects, including short-term consultants and the question of sub-contracting; the monitoring and backstopping of projects by the Executing Agency; inter-agency co-operation; and the contributions of governments to the projects.

1. Delivery of the UNDP-financed components

(a) International staff

46. On the whole, the delivery of the UNDP-financed inputs was fairly satisfactory, although a number of problem areas require attention. The actual cost to UNDP of the expert component was 50 per cent higher on average than the originally estimated cost, a reflection in roughly equal measures of both the increase in the duration and size of projects and of rising costs. Projects in Asia and in Latin America and UN-executed projects show higher than average cost increases: this was to be expected, since such projects are often initially designed to last a shorter time than the average, in the expectation of their extension.

47. Certain difficulties have been experienced in recruiting and selecting qualified international staff. Recruitment delays were sometimes long for a large number of projects, particularly during their initial stages and one, or possibly two, projects were seriously affected on these grounds. On average, there was a delay of four months between a project's originally planned starting date and the arrival of the first international staff member; however, about one-tenth of all the projects reviewed (at a combined cost to UNDP of $2.1m) were ten months or more late in starting. Moreover, it took much longer for the entire group of international personnel to be recruited and fielded. Most projects suffered from delays caused by the lengthy recruitment procedures of the UN system, and in some cases by government delays in selecting candidates: the latter resulting sometimes in the non-availability of the candidate. Whatever the reasons for the delays - and there is evidence to suggest that the recruitment process is speeding up - there is no doubt that the efficiency of the projects in attaining their objectives was adversely affected by them. In particular, the difficulties in fielding all of the

international members of the project at more or less the same time inevitably affected the contribution of the projects to the work of the planning offices.

48. Perhaps a more serious problem than that of recruitment delays was the heavy turnover of the international staff in some projects. About one-third of the posts in the projects either had more than one successive occupant or were cancelled; this figure rose to over 50 per cent in the case of the projects in Africa. The reasons are varied - personality problems and difficult living conditions were two of the more important - but given the time needed for project personnel to settle in and become fully effective, frequent changes were detrimental.

49. A few projects relied heavily on short-term consultants rather than resident experts - notably the projects in Ecuador and Korea. This arrangement is particularly appropriate where the planning office is already relatively well established, assistance is required only for short periods in specific fields and high-level consultants are readily available. The record in implementation of projects providing only or mainly short-term consultants is better than the average for all the projects reviewed. In the sample of projects as a whole, however, the consultancy component was only partially implemented (45 per cent of actual against planned); in only about 40 per cent of the projects was this component implemented by more than 50 per cent. This low implementation rate may be due in part to a tendency of project designers to include a provision for consultants, often without indicating the specific areas requiring assistance, as a form of reserve fund to allow for flexibility in implementation.

50. The costs of long-term experts and the growing capacity of planning offices in developing countries would suggest that the use of short-term consultants in planning projects may well become more frequent.[12/] When the use of short-term consultants is appropriate it has the considerable advantages of flexibility and making possible the recruitment of personnel who would probably not be available for longer assignments. The evidence gathered by the study suggests that there may be a need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to government requests for short-term specialized consultants, whether for one or several repetitive visits. For example, procedures for the recruitment of consultants might be made more flexible by giving the international project staff more responsibility for this matter.

51. Nearly half the experts in development planning projects were themselves nationals of developing countries. In Latin America the large majority of experts were themselves Latin American; in the other regions, experts served

12/ See paragraph 351 of report of JIU on "Role of Experts in Development Co-operation" (JIU/REP/78/3, March 1978).

in their own regions only rarely. The recruitment of such personnel is to be encouraged, given the considerable experience of development planning in many developing countries and the frequent applicability of specific experience gained in one developing country to the conditions in another. Development planning is clearly a significant area for promoting technical co-operation among developing countries, as was confirmed at the United Nations conference on this subject.

52. It is worth noting that the average cost of delivering an international expert work-month varies very considerably according to executing agency, being (in 1977) $3,904 for the United Nations and $5,578 for the World Bank.13/ These figures are for all UNDP-financed projects executed by these agencies, but it is thought that the cost difference would not be very much less for development planning projects considered separately.

53. The study considered the important question of the quality and usefulness of the work of the international staff. The substantive activities of the projects are discussed below, but here the obvious must be emphasized - namely that the quality and technical knowledge of the individual experts is an indispensable ingredient to the success of the projects. Economists working in the central planning agencies have a potentially very influential role: they become involved with critical policy issues affecting the distribution of political and economic power. Whilst this may be true of technical co-operation personnel working in other areas, the planner is dealing with more sensitive issues than most, and they must therefore clearly demonstrate that their loyalty is undivided. Not only should the experts possess a wide range of technical knowledge: they must also be able to transfer their knowledge to others, and above all they must have favourable personality characteristics of discretion, persuasion and tact. In the light of these demanding qualities, governments and executing agencies appear to have been relatively satisfied with the services that have been provided, although greater pedagogical experience and know-how would have been desirable.

54. There is one other feature of the recruitment of staff of some significance. In some cases, notably in Latin America, governments were able, often with the assistance of UNDP field staff or experts, to nominate specific candidates for posts whose qualifications were already known to them. Greater government involvement in the management of projects is to be welcomed, in line with the decisions of the Governing Council on New Dimensions in Technical Co-operation. The evidence gathered by the study confirms that nomination by governments of specific candidates tends to lead to rapid, efficient recruitment of experts who, because previously known, are more likely to adjust quickly to their working environment. It should be noted, however, that in a few cases recruitment by

13/ Provisional figures

pre-selection was done so informally that headquarters control of candidates did not occur and written records of recruitment procedures were not made. On the whole, however, in the rather limited sample of projects concerned, the outcome justified the experience.

55. Several general improvements in the process of recruitment of international staff are recommended. First, an attempt should be made to simplify and accelerate UN recruitment procedures; it is to be hoped that placing the Technical Assistance Recruitment Service (TARS) within the recently established Department of Technical Co-operation for Development will facilitate this. To help TARS in its work, the earliest possible submission of job descriptions to it is to be strongly endorsed 14/: an earlier indication of likely future requests would also help the recruitment process. Greater efforts should be made to recruit, brief and field the international staff as a team. Second, governments should be strongly encouraged to make decisions on candidates quickly. Third, the pre-nomination of known candidates by government, project managers, etc., should be welcomed and encouraged. For each post, governments should be asked whether they wish to make nominations. If so, such proposals should be welcomed, and candidates should be evaluated and processed for recruitment with the minimum of delay. If the government has no candidates to recommend, then the normal machinery for recruitment would be utilized. Fourth, and complementary to existing recruitment procedures, advertising in professional journals might broaden the potential list of candidates, and interviews would provide a better guarantee of quality and the personal attributes so essential in the sensitive policy area of development planning: though this would increase the cost of recruitment, the benefits in terms of better quality and less turnover of staff could be considerable. Fifth, the area of development planning is particularly appropriate for technical co-operation among developing countries, and planning offices could well exchange personnel through twinning arrangements. Finally, there is a growing need for short-term specialized consultants, and the United Nations system should improve its operational efficiency in responding to requests of governments for services of this kind: a publicised roster or panel - such as presently exists for interregional advisers of planners available at little notice for short-term missions - would be a step in this direction.

(b) Sub-contracting

56. Four of the 43 projects were carried out through a sub-contract to a consulting firm; the UN system has also had earlier experiences with sub-contracting this type of project. The arguments generally advanced in favour of sub-contracting

14/ TARS estimates that an average of six months is required between receiving a job description and fielding a (long-term) expert. Given the recruitment procedures, including circulation of job descriptions, evaluation of candidates and government acceptance/rejection, it is doubful whether this period can be further reduced.

are the faster delivery of personnel and the advantages of having international personnel with a similar outlook and approach when working together. The study has produced no evidence to support these assertions[15/] and even if this were the case, these attractions would not necessarily justify the higher costs of sub-contracting. The backstopping provided to planning projects by the sub-contractor seems generally to be inferior to that provided by the UN system to projects executed by means of direct recruitment. In the case of the United Nations itself, the quality of the backstopping is undoubtedly facilitated by the special arrangements in the Secretariat for supporting development planning. Moreover, training and institution-building aspects are likely to be less strongly emphasized in sub-contracted projects, since consultancy firms are organised generally to carry out specific and discrete pieces of work. However, certain direct support projects directed towards the carrying out of specific tasks - for example a feasibility study, or a sector study - may lend themselves more readily to execution through sub-contracting.

(c) Fellowships

57. On average, 62 per cent of the training component was implemented, varying from 45 per cent in Latin America and 58 per cent in Africa to 88 per cent in the Arab world: 96 per cent of the training component of World Bank-executed projects was implemented. The low implementation rate of this component, which, as has been mentioned, was usually a low proportion of the total planned cost to UNDP, must have adversely affected staff development. The low implementation rate of the training component (i.e., actual against planned) in contrast to the over-implementation of the expert component (in part through extension, in real terms, of the size of the expert component) would clearly suggest a shift away from formal training towards more advisory and executive type activities during project implementation. The consequences of this shift and the over-all impact of the training programmes in the context of institution-building are discussed in Section (d) below.

(d) Equipment

58. The small equipment component (about 3 per cent of the total cost to UNDP) was implemented on the average rate of 74 per cent which varied from 54 per cent in Africa to 139 per cent in the Arab region. The equipment component was large (including a language laboratory and a small computer) in only one project, where, in fact, there was evidence to suggest it was not being fully utilized. Other than vehicles and calculators, books and periodicals for the libraries of planning offices represented an important feature of the equipment component: this enabled the planning offices to have access to a wide range of different works on planning, as well as keeping up to date with the recent literature on techniques and approaches to planning.

15/ The efficiency of delivery of the expert component in one project executed by sub-contract and visited during the course of the study was quite poor.

2. Monitoring and backstopping

59. The Executing Agencies - the United Nations and the World Bank - have carried out their responsibilities for monitoring adequately, constrained in part by the limited availability of funds to enable the staff of one Executing Agency to visit projects and in part by the occasional lack of progress and/or substantive reports on projects. With respect to agency visits, the ideal norm of one visit a year for large-scale projects was not attained in the case of the UN-executed projects, though considerably exceeded in the case of World Bank-executed projects. The absence of substantive reports is sometimes a reflexion of the governments' understandable wish not to give too wide a circulation to reports on sensitive issues. Nevertheless, the submission of progress reports on projects is essential for the process of monitoring, and the international staff should be required to report. In cases of a specific government desire for discretion, the staff might submit a progress report which discusses activities of the project in general terms without going into substantive details. A further difficulty arose in the case of projects without international project managers or permanent international staff: the six-monthly progress reports were submitted only irregularly, if at all. The senior international staff member, or the senior government official in the cases of projects with no permanent international staff, are responsible for reporting on projects without project managers. Irrespective of the mode of management of the project, the Executing Agencies should insist on regular reporting to headquarters of a project's progress.

60. Monitoring provides the Executing Agency with the information necessary for periodic revisions of the project document. Several of the projects reviewed changed their areas of emphasis during the course of implementation; this is to be expected, since political and economic circumstances change. Although the work programme and immediate objectives of such projects should have been formally changed through project document revisions to reflect these shifting priorities of governments, in fact most formal revisions concerned only the budget of the UNDP-financed contribution. It might also be noted here that project files were sometimes incomplete and deficiently organized. This made the work of present evaluation more difficult and more generally limited the effectiveness of monitoring, backstopping and evaluation of projects.

61. Although it is true that backstopping was constrained by the inadequacies of the monitoring process, the study did find evidence that contact between the staff of projects and the Executing Agencies was rather limited, and that the central planning offices would have welcomed more advice and assistance from the substantive staff of the agencies concerned. The lack of travel funds, however, limited the scope for effective backstopping.

62. Several of the international staff currently on the projects referred to the usefulness of occasional pieces of general information provided by the Executing Agencies on such matters as recent developments in planning techniques, surveys of world-wide and regional economic problems and prospects and summaries of recent developments in the UN system on international economic co-operation for development. There did appear to be scope, moreover, for a greater transfer of approaches and experiences in technical co-operation in planning from one country and region to another. Analysis drawn from specific cases on new approaches to planning - particularly operational planning and questions of methodology - and feeding back of research findings into actual projects would contribute considerably to ensuring the high quality and effectiveness of the design and implementation of projects. The Executing Agencies should be encouraged to expand and systematize their provision of information and technical materials to their projects and generally develop a more intense relationship between the experts and the substantive staff at headquarters.

63. With respect to UN-executed projects, the recent establishment of the new Departments for International Economic and Social Affairs and for Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD), consequent to the General Assembly resolution 32/197 on the Restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, should improve the function of backstopping at headquarters. Development Planning Advisory Services (DPAS), the UN office responsible for substantive backstopping in the field of development planning, is to assume additional responsibilities for research into planning methods and approaches: in particular, it might examine systematically the experience of different approaches to planning, thereby institutionalizing the provision of substantive backstopping to UNDP-assisted projects. The location of DPAS within DTCD should facilitate a better link between the design and execution of planning projects and their monitoring and follow-up.

3. Inter-agency co-operation in the implementation of projects

64. Several of the projects studied involved one Executing Agency and a number of associated agencies (as many as three in one case). Planning involves a number of economic and social sectors, and all the organizations of the UN system have a legitimate interest in it. The study has noted that some projects executed with the involvement of associated agencies encountered certain difficulties during the course of implementation, particularly concerning the co-ordination of the work of the international staff. From the point of view of both administrative management and substantive direction, there is much to be said for undivided responsibility for project implementation.

65. It is therefore recommended that henceforth the concept of associated agencies be discontinued in the case of UNDP-assisted projects in central planning agencies; that for each project the principal implementing agency be designated Executing Agency; and that other agencies be invited to nominate, as appropriate, international staff for the project, to be seconded to the single Executing Agency. These recommendations would require modification of

the standard agreement between the Executing Agency and other organizations nominating candidates for expert posts.

66. The practice of involving the regional institutes for planning in UNDP-assisted planning projects has been carried out the furthest in Latin America: for example, ILPES was involved in a number of projects either as, in effect, Executing Agency, or as a source for consultancy services or through the carrying out of training programmes. Although the example of ILPES might not be immediately applicable in the other regions, over the longer term it would be useful for the institutes to participate more effectively in country-level technical co-operation, depending of course on their administrative and technical capabilities. For example, the institutes might be asked to assist in preparing projects (particularly in the light of the proposal to design projects around the concept of staff development); the institutes might also be useful - when acting in an advisory capacity - as a source for consultants for some projects; in-country training programmes in specific aspects of planning could be carried out by the institutes; and other backstopping and supporting functions might also be entrusted to the institutes on a case-by-case basis. In general, a more direct link might be established between the regular training programmes of the institutes, and country-level technical co-operation in the field of planning financed by UNDP.

67. It should also be noted that a more direct involvement in technical assistance need not adversely affect current activities of the regional institutes. Rather, it would help them to insure that such activities as research keep closely related to the present and actual needs of the countries' planning offices. However, the institutes should properly adapt themselves to meet these new roles in technical co-operation; for instance, they should renew their endeavours for keeping abreast of new developments in planning concepts and techniques and they must constantly analyze their own experience in those areas. It might also be mentioned that through this involvement in technical assistance the regional institutes may constitute a useful element for TCDC as referred to in paragraph 51.

68. In most cases, the UNDP-financed projects were only part of a group of technical assistance projects in the planning agency, provided by several multi- and bilateral sources. The existence of this related assistance inevitably affected the character of the UNDP-financed project. However, the extent to which the UNDP projects were co-ordinated with other technical assistance activities varied greatly. The study noted some examples of very close co-operation between UNDP-assisted projects and other sources of assistance such as the World Bank, the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Development Bank. For example, one UNDP-assisted project - involving three different funding agencies - was implemented without difficulty, since full responsibility for execution was firmly assigned to one Executing Agency. Co-ordination in some other projects, for example, in Africa, was less effective. Whilst governments are responsible for the co-ordination of

assistance to planning offices, UNDP-assisted projects should always be designed and implemented taking into account related assistance being provided from other sources.

4. National contribution to the projects

69. The implementation of government contributions to the projects - in terms of the provison of qualified national staff - varied considerably. The scarcity and/or rapid turnover of national staff was a major factor in a large number of the projects, particularly in Africa. Countries with a more developed educational base, and less severe over-all manpower shortages were generally better able to provide national staff for the duration of the project. In general, however, the shortage and turnover of national staff endangered the very concept of institution-building and skill transfer and occasionally called into question the basic validity of the projects.[16/] A number of common factors, other than over-all manpower shortage, characterized the situation. Planners have a versatile background and high mobility. The often low prestige of planning offices and consequent job dissatisfaction contributed to the frequency with which planners were attracted to posts with better terms and conditions of service in the parastatal and private sectors, universities or abroad. More influential jobs elsewhere in government also proved to be a powerful incentive. The absence or ineffectiveness of appropriate personnel policies, including measures to attract, retain and/or replace skilled personnel was also a contributory factor. (The importance of a government's support for planning as a necessary condition for enabling a technical assistance project in this field to be effective will be discussed in section C).

C. Assessment of substantive activities[17/]

70. The main focus of the study was institution-building, or contributing to the development of self-reliant planning agencies. Projects that are intended to contribute primarily to institution-building also include, however, direct support for carrying out particular substantive planning functions, which in turn are likely to strengthen the country's planning process. The findings of the study on this direct support for advisory and executive activities will be assessed in this section: the projects' effectiveness in institution-building will be discussed in Section D.

16/ One project succeeded in training only one full-time and two part-time national staff to work in the local institution, instead of the twenty-two originally planned. After four years of assistance to another project, no national staff at all had been trained.

17/ Most of the material in this section is based on the intensive study of the eleven projects which were visited in the field as part of this evaluation. Whenever possible, however, such material was supplemented with observations resulting from the desk review of the 43 projects.

71. An assessment of the activities of a technical co-operation project in planning involves problems of definition and measurement. On the one hand, there is need to identify the norms against which the achievements of the projects might be judged. The study focussed upon the evaluation of achievements in relation to the project's immediate objectives in the context of the steps required to establish a self-reliant planning capability. The study also attempted an appraisal of the objectives themselves, given the range of development issues to be considered and the type of planning to be undertaken, although in no way did the study question the choice by governments of their paths of development. On the other hand, once the norms had been agreed upon, there remained the formidable problem of measuring success or failure. Since technical co-operation in development planning is difficult to measure in quantifiable terms, this requires a qualitative and inevitably somewhat subjective judgement. Furthermore, it is always difficult to separate the contribution of the project as such from the wider work of the central planning agency to which it is attached: by the very nature of planning, no one function or task can be handled by one group of individuals or a single institution.

72. Whatever the criteria, however, one conclusion which emerged from the study is that the most influential factor in determining the success or failure of a project in this field is the importance a government attaches to planning as a rational framework for decision-making. To the extent that planning plays a central role in the allocation of resources, the formulation of policies, and the determination of objectives, the chances are much greater that the technical co-operation projects will attain their objectives.

73. The study has clearly shown the limitations in this regard. Planning in most of the countries visited is generally understood to mean the determination of a set of medium-term development objectives and targets in broad terms, thus providing only a general frame of reference for decision-making. The actual allocation of domestic and external resources to specific purposes and projects is often made outside the planning process proper, and generally is not linked directly with the global and aggregate objectives of the medium-term plans. Operational annual planning has been established in only a few countries. In addition, the lack of fiscal discipline - in the sense of conforming with budget allocations - undermines the very meaning of planning and annual budgeting. Similarly, specific policies - whether global or sectoral - are sometimes determined without taking into account the objectives and targets embodied in the plan, and the planning agencies do not always have the opportunity to influence their formulation.

74. Furthermore, developing countries typically have small and weak economies highly vulnerable to exogenous factors: a change in international terms of trade or a natural disaster can render a carefully prepared medium-term plan largely irrelevant. Finally, of course, a change of government may modify development objectives and policies, thereby affecting the planning process in important ways.

75. The above-cited limitations to effective planning were present in most of the countries visited during the course of the study. Planning has therefore not yet assumed an operational and critical role in these countries. As a result, planning agencies remained insufficiently influential, and tended to be dominated by the more powerful traditional institutions - such as ministries of finance and central banks - with a relatively narrower and more short-run point of view. The strengthening of the planning process in a majority of the countries visited is therefore a matter of political will and commitment, and well-staffed planning offices and effective technical co-operation projects in the area of planning will result only if that will and commitment are present.

1. The setting of the projects

76. Despite significant differences in the socio-economic context and resource endowments of the countries visited, the planning agencies, and therefore the projects showed similar approaches to planning. In most projects, emphasis was placed on formulating a macro-economic medium-term plan, often using sophisticated development models that required more reliable information than was available. The techniques of planning (methods of projections, input-output models, etc.) often appeared to have assumed greater importance than the policy content of development plans, and than the identification and development of specific programmes and projects for investment, employment and other purposes. This stems from the above-mentioned tendency not to use planning agencies in critical policy-making and programming roles, as well as from the fact that planning techniques have been developed in more advanced countries where this is facilitated by the availability of data. It is not only that international experts may tend to use and recommend such techniques but also that the same might be true of national officials, most of whom have had training in universities of industrialized countries and/or in local universities which were, in turn, influenced directly or indirectly by foreign ones. An approach emphasizing problem areas and solutions might be suitable to the conditions existing in many developing countries and, complementarily, an effort should be made to identify and utilize over-all planning techniques requiring a less sophisticated information basis.

77. The institutional framework in which planning occurred followed a common pattern in all of the countries visited: a high policy-making body at sub-cabinet level served by a technical secretariat in the form of either a ministry or a commission. The size of the technical secretariat varied greatly among the countries (from about ten national professionals in some cases to over 100 in Ecuador, Korea and Sudan). The difference in the size of the planning offices appears to be a function in part of the type of planning being carried out and in part of the level of development of public administration as a whole. In some countries, for example, the planning office had responsibility for the administration of the development budget and therefore a large staff; however, this was a budgetary allocation and control function and not a planning function.

78. The more disaggregated the level of planning, the greater the size of the planning office: planning at the project, product or commodity level in some countries inevitably requires more planners than does target-setting or over-all planning at the global level. In other countries, with as yet a small public administration (several African countries for example), the shortage of trained manpower and the constraints to expanding government revenues limited the size of the planning offices and the level of disaggregation of planning. Whatever the size of the planning secretariats, the UNDP-assisted projects were attached to them, usually to the general and over-all macro-planning units, with the projects' sector and regional planners located in the administrative units responsible for these functions.

79. The staff of the projects worked with economists and planners in other government departments, occasionally through secondment from the central planning office. In one case, Ecuador, the project was attached to both the JUNAPLA, the planning office, and to the central bank, with beneficial effects in efforts to introduce a system of annual planning and to strengthen the relations between these two institutions. In other cases, the projects were part of a larger package of technical assistance to planning from the UN system and other sources (see also paragraph 68).

80. It has already been noted that a government's general support for planning is a necessary condition for making a planning agency effective, wherever that agency is located within the structure of public administration. Countries have tried a number of alternatives for the placing of the planning agency, and experience would indicate that there is no one ideal solution. Technical co-operation should, however, be sufficiently flexible to accommodate any particular alternative. Nevertheless, central planning agencies are generally more effective if they serve in an advisory capacity to the government's highest authorities, with direct access to the chief executive and enjoying his or her fullest confidence. In contrast, a planning agency seems often to be less effective if it is a ministry equal in rank to all other ministries, or is a department within a ministry. Of course, whilst the formal position accorded to a planning office is generally a function of a government's substantive support for planning, mentioned earlier, the institutional location of the secretariat for planning has a major influence on the effectiveness of a technical co-operation project.

2. Comprehensive national planning

81. Nearly all the UNDP-assisted projects reviewed by missions were involved in the preparation of the medium-term socio-economic development plans. This was perhaps the most important contribution that projects in Costa Rica, Honduras, Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan and Zambia made to the planning process.[18/]

18/ The plans, and their dates, prepared under the auspices of UNDP-assisted projects were as follows: Costa Rica, 1974-1978; Honduras, 1974-1978; the 1st National Development Plan, Liberia (1976-1980); the Second (1972-1976) and Third (1977-1981) Plans, Rwanda; the 5th Plan, Senegal (1977-1981); the Third Plan, Sudan (1977/78-1982/83); and the Third Plan, Zambia (1977-1981).

Other UNDP-assisted projects, for example those in Syria and Korea, also contributed to the process of plan preparation, but in a less significant way; and still further projects included in the sample of 43 (e.g., Central African Empire, Chad, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Jordan, Western Samoa, El Salvador) were likewise involved in plan preparation.

82. The process of plan preparation typically takes 18-24 months and involves much of the government machinery and the parastatal and private sector. The role of the planning agency in this exercise is one of leadership and co-ordination. Under the over-all authority and direction of the political authorities, the planning agency provides the framework and the main lines of the development strategy; in selecting priorities it arbitrates between the claims of competing departments. The instrument of inter-ministerial working groups and committees was the method most commonly used by planning offices for the purpose of plan preparation.

83. The involvement of the projects in preparing medium-term plans consisted in part of general support to the over-all planning process itself - for example participation in inter-ministerial working groups - and in part of developing the general structure or framework of the plan. The sector economists and the regional planners worked closely with colleagues in the ministerial planning units and the regional departments in the preparation of policies, plans, programmes and projects for particular sectors and regions, whilst the general economists and planners assisted in calculating the main macro-economic parameters, in the technical analysis for over-all resource allocation, in target setting and over-all policy formulation.

84. Despite these common characteristics, the contents and methods of the international experts' work varied greatly, as a function of the relative strength of the planning agency and of the project's own objectives and work programme. In some cases, preparing the medium-term plan was the project's major output and, due to scarcity of national staff, the plan was prepared largely by international expertise. The extent to which this mode of working without national staff is compatible with the objective of institution-building is debatable. In practice, however, there was probably not much choice, since those governments that were needing the plan so urgently would not have permitted its finalization to be delayed on the grounds of in-service training. The international staff themselves may also have preferred the professionally more satisfying task of plan preparation to informal training sessions. In one country, several postponements of the publication date of the plan - due to political and economic circumstances beyond the control of the government concerned - unfortunately meant that the project staff spent three years producing successive drafts of the plan with the result that time for training was severely reduced.

85. Given the frequent insistence of governments on producing a plan, and the time required to produce a technically sound and worthwhile document, the emphasis on formal planning in many of the projects reviewed is likely to have

had a serious effect on efforts at institution-building. Only a few projects appeared to have found a successful compromose between involvement in plan preparation and acting in a supportive role to the national staff who had principal responsibility for it. In these cases (Honduras, Sudan), the plan was prepared mainly by national staff, but the involvement of the international staff did result in a plan of higher technical quality.

86. Several of the UNDP-assisted projects were concerned with revising plans, and monitoring their implementation. This was particularly important where unforeseeable exogenous factors changed the economic environment in major ways. This was the case in Honduras, where the international project staff made important contributions to a major revision of a medium-term plan, required after a natural disaster, and in Senegal where unfavourable changes in the international terms of trade necessitated a reformulation of the main macro-economic variables.

87. Some of the projects were expected to assist in the process of plan implementation. In fact responsibility for implementing plans and programmes is spread throughout the public and private sectors and is certainly not the exclusive responsibility of any one institution. The planning office can monitor the progress of implementation, and some projects (Liberia, Senegal) were helpful in establishing procedures for this purpose. However, in common with many other medium-term plans, the plans prepared with the help of the UNDP-assisted projects tended to be weak in not explicitly linking the macro and micro parts of the plans, and in not taking account of (and proposing measures to overcome) likely implementation difficulties as one of the constraints in planning.

88. Perspective/long-term planning was carried out in a few projects (Honduras, Korea, Senegal). In Honduras, this was a particularly significant activity: the project assisted in drawing up a long-term (15-year) national development strategy, which has provided the framework for the two five-year plans in whose preparation the project has also participated. In Senegal, the project made some preliminary projections of the economy up to the year 2001, as part of a government study on the development of Senegalese society up to that year.

89. Developing econometric models was sometimes part of the work of preparing medium-term plans, but in a few cases project personnel assisted in developing such models outside the immediate context of plan preparation. Short-term forecasting models were thus produced in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Korea, Papua New Guinea and Liberia, the latter with the assistance of World Bank staff. One of these models is in regular use by the central planning agency and other government institutions, a second is expected to become operational soon, and the use of the third awaits the availability of qualified national staff.

90. Annual planning was an important area of assistance in a number of projects. In one case (Ecuador), the project assisted exclusively in developing an annual planning system in the central planning agency, in collaboration with the central bank. This project was instrumental in introducing those planning tools which make annual planning possible (an improved series of national accounts, periodic economic surveys and analyses, econometric models and economic budgeting). In a few other cases (Costa Rica, Honduras, Sudan), the projects participated in efforts to prepare annual plans. In most cases, however, the projects were unable to make major contributions in this field even when such were included among the project's objectives. The reasons for this varied. As mentioned earlier, the projects' objectives were often too ambitious and other tasks, such as preparing medium-term plans or providing immediately required policy advice, took priority. Moreover, annual planning implies a radical change in the decision-making process, both analytically as well as institutionally. By establishing direct and observable links between the medium-term plan and annual budgets, annual planning tends to narrow the flexibility that the political authorities enjoy in decision-making, as well as altering the traditional lines of communications between the central government agencies.

91. Without undertaking a complete annual planning exercise, several projects (Liberia, Sudan and Zambia) were involved in financial planning and budgeting, particularly the preparation of the development budget. In another country, Papua New Guinea, the planning office places considerable emphasis on the annual budgetary process, linked to the four-year expenditure plan. The significance of the involvement varied greatly, mainly because central planning agencies have only a limited role in the decision-making processes in these fields. Development budgeting is an example: although the allocation of annual public sector development expenditures is formally determined by the planning agencies in the countries visited, there is in practice limited scope for influence in the budgetary process. A large part of development expenditure is financed externally, and the allocation of external financial resources often takes place without involving the planning offices. In addition, the planning offices were rarely involved in discussions and decisions on fiscal policies, including such things as the development impact of revenue-raising measures and appropriate policies for external borrowing. Furthermore, elements of recurrent expenditure have important development implications (education, health and road maintenance for example) and yet the planning offices were not able to influence the growth and distribution of such expenditures. Moreover, development expenditures are sometimes financed from extra-budgetary sources and/or are politically determined on an ad hoc basis, and this severely limits the amount of real resources available for allocation to priority programmes and priorities. In such circumstances and where the planning office is responsible for administering the budget, the more important planning function tends to be submerged in efforts to introduce some degree of fiscal discipline and control.

92. An annual economic survey is a necessary step towards introducing annual planning and several projects assisted planning offices in their efforts to carry out and publish such surveys (Costa Rica, Ecuador, Liberia, Zambia). In a few cases, project personnel contributed to developing methodologies for annual surveys of the national economy and to carrying out such surveys even when they did not assist in introducing annual planning (Costa Rica, Zambia). In Ecuador, the introduction of a system of quarterly and semi-annual surveys of key sectors of the economy was a major part of establishing the groundwork necessary for an annual planning system; in this case, the work on developing and undertaking these sectoral surveys was also instrumental in strengthening the working relations between the planning agency, the central bank, and several sectoral government institutions. In this case, as in the case of the annual surveys in Liberia, the transfer of experience took place over a relatively short period of time and these surveys are now undertaken regularly by national staff.

93. A few projects (Ecuador, Liberia) made important contributions to improving national accounts, particularly with regard to improving the statistical data on which the accounts were based. The statistical data base is weak in most developing countries and effective planning requires timely and reliable information. In both the Ecuador and Liberia projects, practical and useful advice was provided. In Liberia, building upon previous assistance in statistics from the United Nations, the project prepared a new series of national accounts and subsequently initiated work on the first series of balance-of-payments data for the country. In Ecuador, the work was carried out within the context of developing the systems necessary for annual planning.

94. Despite the long-term structural imbalance in the external sector in a majority of developing countries, planning for the external sector was generally neglected not only during the implementation of the UNDP-assisted projects in the field of planning, but also even in project design. This does not necessarily mean that governments have ignored such issues as the balance of payments, possibilities for inter-country co-operation, expansion of trade, mobilization of external resources and, in general, ways and means to control the influences of the external sector on developments in the rest of the economy. The general practice seems to be that these matters are handled by the ministries of finance and/or the central banks which, however, tend to take a more partial view of external constraints to development. Although planning agencies have sometimes become involved in formulating policies for external borrowing, greater co-ordination between central planning agencies and other government institutions which make decisions concerning the external sector is to be encouraged, and UNDP-assisted planning projects might more frequently include expertise in the planning of the external sector.

95. A number of projects (Costa Rica, Honduras, Sudan) made important contributions to introducing changes in the institutional framework for planning. In one case, the international staff advised in the preparation of a new national planning law. This has now been implemented and, as a result, the central planning agency has more resources (both financial and human) and wider

responsibilities. In another case, the medium-term plan prepared with international assistance included provisions for establishing new government and parastatal institutions for planning and administering key sectors of the economy; these institutions are now functioning effectively as important public agencies. When deemed appropriate by governments, this kind of advice on improving the planning machinery can be a direct, efficient and important contribution to institution-building.

96. The international staff in all the projects found themselves involved at one time or another in routine work of the central planning agency not indicated in the project documents. Such activities included project pre-evaluation, assisting in negotiating for foreign technical assistance and drafting reports and speeches for the planning agencies' higher authorities. It is understandable that governments wish to take maximum advantage of the presence of international experts and it would be reasonable for the project staff to accept this and provide the best assistance possible even in areas not specified in project documents. Sometimes the need for certain work arose unexpectedly, given the impossibility of foreseeing all the issues with which a planning office will be concerned; such situations included, for example, preparing policy options for the consideration of the planning agencies' higher authorities in response to external factors seriously affecting plan implementation (Liberia), or in proposing measures to mitigate the effects of natural disasters (Honduras). Time was spent by the international staff in most of the projects on specific policy issues including establishing objectives and recommending strategies for the development of particular sectors or regions and/or for introducing financial, economic or social policy measures. This type of planning related directly to specific decision-making is particularly important in increasing the effective role of the central planning agency in the government structure.

97. There were a number of other cases, however, when much of the unanticipated work of the project staff was less technical, and governments may wish to be quite certain in these cases that involving international staff in administrative tasks justifies the high costs involved. On the whole, however, the national and international personnel were able to achieve an acceptable balance between advisory and executive tasks and between carrying out the work plan as indicated in the project document and the need for flexibility in implementation.

3. Sectoral planning

98. Nearly all of the projects had an important sectoral planning component, either through the provision of sectoral planners, or through the orientation of the work of the general planners. The projects in Costa Rica, Honduras, Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Zambia placed a relatively heavy emphasis on planning for agriculture, industry/human resources, physical infrastructure, and the natural resources. In Honduras, for example, reflecting government priorities, the project staff concentrated on the agriculture and forestry sectors. More generally, the international project personnel played an active role in preparing the sectoral components of medium-term plans, with particular respect to demand and output projections, resource allocations,

formulating sectoral policies and, in certain cases, identifying, preparing and appraising projects. In many cases, international personnel also contributed to preparing specific sectoral and subsectoral studies.

99. Responsibilities for sectoral planning varied in the countries visited. In a few countries, responsibility was vested primarily in the central planning agency assisted by UNDP; in the majority of cases, however (in most of the African countries for example), sectoral planning was undertaken by the executive ministries. In many of these countries, however, sectoral planning had only recently been introduced and ministerial planning units were inadequately staffed, particularly as regards capacity for project preparation. Furthermore, co-ordination between the central planning agency and the sectoral ministries was often weak, with unclear responsibilities on each side.

100. Such constraints severely limited the contribution of the projects to the development of sector planning, and to improved co-ordination between the executive departments and the central planning agencies. In some cases, however, improvements were made: in Liberia for example, inter-ministerial relationships were strengthened through the establishment of a better system for preparing the development budget; in Senegal, the exercise of regular plan revisions enabled the executive ministries to understand better the role and functions of the Ministry of Planning and Co-operation. The process of plan preparation in several countries, and the establishment of inter-ministerial working groups provided a collective view of the constraints to and prospects of development in the different sectors: unfortunately attempts to institutionalise these working groups were not successful. In Ecuador, Honduras and Liberia, however, the projects were able to help strengthen links between the central and sectoral planning institutions.

101. In the difficult circumstances facing governments in their efforts to develop sectoral planning, the most that can be expected of technical co-operation is to bring the matter to the attention of the authorities, provide examples from other countries, and suggest methods for improved co-ordination between ministerial planning units and the central planning agency. The task of governments could be facilitated in this endeavour, if (as suggested in paragraph 42) comprehensive planning projects were regarded as the means for strengthening the planning system as a whole, at both the central and sectoral level. In a number of countries visited, assistance was provided in separate but parallel projects in the areas of both comprehensive and sectoral planning, but no efforts appear to have been made by UNDP and the Participating and Executing Agencies to co-ordinate such assistance in an integrated and mutually supportive manner. The concept of the so-called umbrella project in Afghanistan (see paragraph 39) is an approach that could well be tried in other similar situations.

4. Regional planning

102. A number of projects (Honduras, Liberia, Senegal, Zambia) had, as one of their objectives, assistance in regional planning. The term "regional planning" is used in several senses, including planning the spatial allocation of government investment, decentralizing decision-making and/or administration to subnational geographic levels, and planning for subnational regions as units (within the context of national planning). The contribution of technical assistance to this type of planning is determined largely by the definition of regional planning and the importance attached to it by the government. It is worth noting that when a central planning agency is inadequately staffed, regional planning agencies are likely to be even more so.

103. In Senegal and Zambia, full-time international regional planning experts were provided by the projects; they participated in preparing development plans for (subnational) regions, in providing technical assistance to local development authorities, in studying the spatial allocation of government investment and in developing policies for regional planning. A particular feature of the project in Senegal was the intensive work carried out to test an approach to regional planning. Within the context of the administrative reform of decentralization then being carried out, a plan for the Thiès region was prepared. This was a successful experiment, and laid some of the basis for the preparation of plans for the eight regions of Senegal included in the recently issued fifth plan (1977-1981). In other cases (Honduras, Liberia, Rwanda), assistance to regional planning was also provided, but of less importance, the activities undertaken were similar in kind to those of the full-time regional planners.

104. The difficulties facing the regional planners were similar to those confronting the sector planners, namely a weak institutional framework, limited numbers of well-trained staff, and inadequacy of available data, all of which are more severe at the regional than at the national level. In addition, there were difficulties of communication between the central planning agency and the regional departments. The central planning agency rarely had their own staff in the field, so whatever planning was undertaken at the regional level was undertaken by administrative staff responsible not to the planning office but to other government departments such as sectoral ministries or the Ministry of the Interior.

105. It is therefore not surprising that only limited progress could be made with the process of more firmly implanting methodologies and procedures for regional planning, and the constraints external to the projects described above are further examples of the extent to which the projects, as designed, could not achieve their objectives without a complementary strengthening of other parts of the planning machinery. Given the scarcity of trained national staff, and the difficulties in communications in a number of developing countries, a case could be made for undertaking regional planning, in the sense of planning the nation-wide spatial allocation of government expenditure and planning for particular regions, only in the central planning agency.

5. Project identification, preparation, appraisal and monitoring

106. Several projects (Afghanistan, Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan and Zambia) placed considerable emphasis on project identification, preparation, appraisal and monitoring. In these projects a beginning was made at institutionalizing project preparation and linking it with the annual budgeting process. Nevertheless, the study's findings appear to confirm the often-held view that project preparation and appraisal is one of the most important areas requiring strengthening in the planning process of many developing countries, and that it is a particularly severe problem in the least developed countries in Africa and elsewhere.

107. Achievement in this field tended to be quite limited, due in part to the weak links between central and sectoral planning units already mentioned. In addition, where qualified planners are scarce in general, it seems that qualified project planners tend to be particularly scarce, and many of the training activities of the projects were concentrated on project preparation and appraisal. A few of the projects (Korea, Rwanda, Sudan) were able to make significant contributions both to developing methodologies for project preparation and to preparing and/or appraising specific projects. In some cases (Senegal, Sudan) a technical assistance project specifically in project planning and explicitly related to the comprehensive planning project has been or will soon be introduced.

108. Much of the work on project monitoring was linked to the procedures for monitoring and revising the plan. A mid-term review and revision of the project content of the medium-term plans were undertaken in some countries (Honduras, Liberia, Senegal and Zambia) and there was the beginning in one country (Liberia) of an institutionalized system for project reporting, linked to the preparation of the development budget and the disbursement of funds.

D. Institution-building

109. Building up a self-reliant planning capability is the main objective of most UNDP-financed projects in this field of activity. Direct support to planning activities, in the form of advisory and executive work, is a feature of all projects, but institution-building is the primary purpose of most of the projects. International technical co-operation is now generally viewed as a temporary, self-liquidating activity leading to self-reliance in the area concerned.

110. In the context of comprehensive development planning, the attainment of self-reliance is understood to mean that level of technical capability and institutional maturity at which the central planning office can satisfactorily perform the functions and carry out the role entrusted to it without recourse to long-term (residential) assistance from abroad. The required level of competence will vary from country to country and through time, being a function of the role planning plays in the process of decision-making. It also depends on the type of planning envisaged for the country and the degree of centralization, ranging, for example, from highly centralised planning to purely indicative planning

guided by the market mechanism. This definition implies that when the basic work of the planning office has been institutionalized and can be carried out essentially by the national planners of the country, then the office may be regarded as self-reliant.

111. The definition does not mean that a planning office has no further need for foreign expertise. On the contrary, it implies a capacity to absorb and distill new approaches and techniques of planning that may be suggested by international experience.19/ Indeed, the most sophisticated planning offices may need the advice of exceptionally well-qualified foreigners for a relatively short duration, in order to undertake a specific job. Nevertheless, it will be noted that this approach to self-reliance corresponds to the definition of technical co-operation established by the Governing Council of UNDP in its decision on New Dimensions in Technical Co-operation.20/

112. The time required to achieve this level of technical and institutional capability in the complex field of development planning will vary from country to country. It is not something that can be achieved in isolation except probably for a short period of time, since the level of development of the public administration in general will obviously affect the capacity of the individual ministries and departments making up the public service. These institutions are interdependent: they draw their staff from the same pool of skilled manpower, who are transferred from one institution to another. In addition, the skills commanded by senior planning professionals are easily marketed outside government, either in the country's private sector, or abroad. Thus self-reliance in planning agencies is also dependent on the country-wide government and non-government pool of skilled manpower. By its very nature, however, planning could play a leading role in the government's efforts to improve its capacity to plan and manage the economy. In any event, the study has shown that the attainment of self-reliance in planning is a process that could well extend over one or more decades, much longer than the duration of one or two typical technical co-operation projects.

113. Governments are using technical co-operation as an important element in their efforts to institutionalize the process of planning. In particular, technical co-operation projects make a significant contribution to training and staff development, generally through a transfer of skills and knowledge from the international staff to the national staff. Such skills might include specific techniques of planning such as model building, forecasting or project appraisal,

19/ At least one central planning office assisted by one of the projects reviewed may be regarded as self-reliant: the purpose of this project was therefore not institution-building, but direct support.

20/ Decision of the Governing Council at its 20th session, 1975: E/5703/Rev.1, page 14. See also General Assembly Resolution 3405 (XXX) on the same subject.

improving the series of national accounts or the accumulation of experience to formulate policies and measures. A better understanding of this process of skill transfer is therefore central to effective technical co-operation. In addition to assisting in training and staff development, and as part of the institution-building process, UNDP-assisted projects can also advise Governments on such matters as the preparation of legislation regarding the role and functions of planning; the internal organization of the planning office; the terms and conditions of service of the professional staff employed in the office; the strengthening of the relationships between the planning office and other departments of Governments; and other related activities.

114. The contribution of the projects reviewed to this process is discussed in the following paragraphs, but it must be remembered that institution-building is a function of several factors, only some of which can be influenced through technical co-operation. A UNDP-assisted project is only one step in the direction of building up a self-reliant planning office, and in some of the countries visited, the UNDP-funded project was not necessarily the most critical source of technical assistance in planning. Although a self-reliant institution was generally the ultimate goal of the different projects, its attainment was influenced by a host of factors over some of which the project had no control.

1. Staff development

115. There were two main types of training activities leading to the development of planning skills: both formal training, consisting of fellowships, study tours and in-country seminars, and in-service training, including in-house workshops and on-the-job training - that is, the transfer of knowledge from international to national personnel as part of their working together. The expression "in-country seminars" is used to describe formal residential training courses, organized by a professional training institution, and outside of the regular work of the project staff (see paragraph 123). The term "in-house workshops" describes informal training sessions, organized by the project staff and related to the ongoing technical work of the central planning agency (see paragraph 126).

116. Section B of this report (particularly paragraphs 42-43) discussed the deficiency of the design of the project with respect to institution-building. There it was noted that despite the importance given to institution-building, project documents rarely spelt out the specific measures likely to lead to self-reliance. For example, despite the range of potential training activities, the specific requirements for skills and know-how of the planning office were rarely set forth, except in the case of fellowships. The project documents were singularly vague on the content and methods of training to be provided. Such essential information as the numbers of national staff to be trained, at what level, in what areas, and by what methods was rarely included. Training programs had an ad hoc character, unrelated to the main thrust of the projects, whereas they should form an integral part of all the activities of each project. In short, though the projects were expected to act in part as instruments of training, and thereby as staff development programmes, there was little indication of the details of a well-structured, organized and costed training programme integrated into each project.

117. It should, however, be noted that the study also reviewed a few direct support type projects. Though training was included in these projects, generally in the form of fellowships, their functional emphasis was on producing certain specific outputs and not on developing national capabilities to produce such outputs in the future. Consequently, such project documents could not have been expected to include measures for in-service training, or defining the work of the international staff in such a way as necessarily to provide a learning experience to the national staff working with them.

(a) Formal training

118. Formal training as a separate budgetary item constituted an average of 8 per cent of the total cost to UNDP of the (36) projects.[21] The actual proportion was even smaller, declining to 6 per cent over the life of the projects. Indeed, only an average of about two-thirds of the formal training component was actually spent. Although this would suggest that the size of the training component should not be increased until the conditions for its more complete implementation can be ensured, the failure to utilize all the available funds might also mean that the type of training being offered was inappropriate and/or at the wrong level.

119. The most common form of formal training in planning projects was of fellowships to attend courses in such fields as general planning, regional planning, project evaluation, quantitative projections, and agricultural or industrial planning. About 30 fellowships were utilized by the national staff of the projects visited, some for the attainment of Masters or Ph.D degrees - a necessary qualification for many of the Government officials concerned - and the rest for short-term study tours. Roughly half of these fellowships may be said to have been successful. Some fellowships in several projects could not be utilised (apparently because of the lack of suitably qualified candidates) and several weaknesses were evident in the case of those fellowships that were taken up.

120. For example, fellows often did not return to work in the planning agencies on their return[22], in some cases, they had had no previous work connexion with the planning agencies even at the time they were granted their fellowships. Even when fellows came from and returned to the planning agencies, they were often trained in subjects not directly related to their specific work or to the activities of the UNDP-assisted projects. In the case of a subcontracted project, the fellowship component was not part of the subcontract, thus reducing even further the relationship between the fellowships and the rest of the project.

21/ It should be borne in mind that since a fellowship-month costs much less than an expert-month, a fellowship/expert cost ratio of, say, 8 to 92 represents a far higher fellowship-month/expert-month ratio than 8 to 92.

22/ "Bonding" - i.e. requiring a returning fellow to spend a minimum period of time (at least equal to the duration of the fellowship) in the planning office was practised by only a few Governments.

121. Whilst UNDP and the Executing Agencies must bear some of the burden for these deficiencies in the use of fellowship funds, it should be noted that fellows are usually proposed to the Executing Agencies by the Government. For the fellowship component to be used effectively, it should form an integral part of the project and it should be managed by the project staff along with the other components of the project. Fellows should be trained in fields specifically relevant to their work and Governments should agree to introduce measures to require fellows to return to the planning agencies on completing their studies. Moreover, project documents should contain, to the extent possible, more detailed information on the kind of training that is required, and how it will be provided.

122. In some cases (Ecuador, Korea) study tours to visit planning agencies or other appropriate institutions in other countries were arranged as part of a project's formal training component. There tours were designed in sufficient detail to ensure that the fellows' time was fully utilized. More generally, this type of training method would seem particularly useful in those situations where the planning agency is sufficiently developed to benefit from a high-level transfer of knowledge, achieved by the fellows without traditional academic course structures. Study tours of this kind can also represent a useful example of technical co-operation among developing countries.

123. In some of the projects reviewed (one each in Honduras, Liberia, Papua New Guinea and in Sudan) formal in-country courses or seminars were organized by training institutions, within the context of the projects. In Honduras, the courses were organized by the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and in Liberia and Sudan by the World Bank's Economic Development Institute (EDI). Both ILPES and EDI have of course been organizing country and regional courses for several years not necessarily associated with the technical co-operation projects, but attended by the staff of many of the planning agencies assisted by UNDP. The UNDP-financed courses generally dealt with specific subjects (for example, methods of project appraisal, or industrial, transport, or general planning) and were attended by personnel from both the central planning agencies and other government institutions concerned with planning, thereby spreading the benefits of training to a wider target group.

124. In some cases (Honduras, Sudan), the opinions were favourable on the quality and usefulness of the courses; in other cases, the opinions varied greatly. Even the latter cases should not be viewed as discouraging; as experience with such courses increases, it should be possible to ensure that they are of consistently high quality and useful. One general comment which seems justifiable on the basis of the above is that more care should be taken to match closely the contents and methods of such courses with the educational backgrounds and professional needs of the trainees. In-country courses, properly designed and conducted, could form an important and relatively cost-effective method of training in UNDP-assisted planning projects. For example, they are a particularly effective method of providing training in project appraisal, a critically important area in the planning process in many developing countries, particularly the least developed.

125. There are, however, only a few institutions capable of organizing and co-ordinating such courses. The possibility might be explored of the United Nations, as Executing Agency, making greater use of the capabilities of EDI, the regional institutes for planning (see paragraph 66) and other training institutions outside the United Nations system. As paragraph 66 noted, the capacities of the regional institutes would have to be built up if they were to carry out a significant number of in-country or sub-regional courses. It is also recommended that Executing Agencies should investigate the capabilities of professional institutions capable of carrying out in-country training courses, for subsequent information for governments and Resident Representatives.

(b) In-service training

126. In some projects (Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal), attempts were made by the international personnel to organize in-house informal workshops for the national staff of the planning agency; occasionally, the staff of other government departments joined the workshops. Participation was not necessarily limited to the formally designated counterparts. This type of training was ad hoc, carried out entirely by the international staff of the projects, and geared directly towards the on-going work of the planning agency.

127. Although the workshops were intended to provide a theoretical and conceptual background to the work that the national staff were carrying out, they had, in general, a very limited effect. Attendance by the national staff was low and erratic. This may have been the result of deficiencies in the design of the workshops, something which would not be surprising since most of the international staff have had little if any formal training in teaching methods. It may also have been the result of the morale in the planning office and high degree of staff turnover. Nevertheless, in Liberia, the workshops were successful, mainly because of the very specific and intensive nature of the subject matter (the preparation of national accounts) and the pedagogical qualities and personal motivation of the international staff member responsible.

128. Provided the relevant conditions are fulfilled, training through in-house workshops should be encouraged and should be present in all institution-building projects. Executing Agencies should be prepared to assist the international staff in the preparation of appropriate course material and the staff should receive, as appropriate, training in the application of pedagogical techniques. Indeed, material developed in one project could well be applied in projects in other countries, always allowing for modifications to suit local circumstances. From the evidence gathered during the course of the missions, the case-study approach appears to be one of those with the most effective training value.

129. The other form of in-service, on-the-job training, is the distinctive feature of an institution-building project, and the most important way in which the planning skills of the national staff can be developed. Given the relatively small direct costs of training in the projects reviewed (see paragraph 118), the process of on-the-job training received even greater importance. The international staff had to participate in carrying out project activities in such a way that, even while the specified outputs were being produced, they provided guidance and training to national staff on how to carry out similar tasks in the future. The success or failure of many of the projects depended very heavily on how effectively the national and international staff worked together.

130. The greater the degree of professional intercourse, the more successful the project. In Ecuador, Korea and Sudan, to cite some examples, much of the skill transfer took place through on-the-job training. The international staff worked on a day-to-day basis with national staff and shared in the normal functioning of the various departments in the planning office. In several projects, they took an active part in the ad hoc working parties established for preparing the plan and in undertaking the planning activities described in Section C of this report. But a number of projects were less successful in bringing about effective and close working relationships between the international and national staff, for a variety of reasons summarized in the following paragraphs.

131. Foremost amonst these was the extent to which the international project personnel were integrated into and identified with, the central planning agency to which they were attached. This was of crucial importance, particularly for projects in Africa. The evidence suggests that the extent to which the projects were integrated into the planning offices was primarily a function of the level of development of the office itself. In some cases, there were so few national staff that the international personnel had little alternative but to work by themselves. In other cases (Ecuador, Honduras, Korea, Sudan) there were enough trained national staff so that the international experts could work with them as colleagues, with in-service training consisting of an exchange of knowledge between professional partners. Co-ordination and supervision were provided by the senior national staff. In intermediate situations, international experts often used national staff as assistants to provide, for example, statistical inputs to their advisory or executive work.

132. There were, however, a number of cases of friction between the national and international staff, sufficient to warrant mention in this report. Working relationships were better to the extent that the international project personnel operated less as an independent unit, attached as a group to the central planning agency and more as individual advisers fully integrated into the established hierarchy of the planning office. Other factors affecting these relationships were tne extent to which each partner understood the respective roles and responsibilities of the other and the degree of unified management and control of the project exercised by the national authorities with the advice of the project manager/team leader. Although the international staff were recruited by the Executing Agency and therefore owed formal responsibility to it, the manner in which they identified with the central planning agency was critical in facilitating their absorption into its work.

133. The extent of integration is also conditioned by the presence or absence of an international project manager, and in this repect the internal co-ordination of the international project staff varied considerably. In some cases (Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Zambia) the team's work was more or less closely co-ordinated by an international project manager; in other cases the international experts seem often to have worked quite independently of one another (and, sometimes, of the national staff as well). In the cases of well-developed planning agencies where the international expertise (from UN and non-UN sources) were supervised by

national executives (Ecuador, Honduras, Korea), the international project personnel were part of a larger number of planners who were generally co-ordinated as a group. This form of integration and national direction seemed to work well where the planning agency was already relatively well staffed. In some cases the projects began with a post for a project manager, but this was subsequently deleted in the course of implementation. Other projects, particularly those in countries with more well established planning offices, did not contain any provision for a project manager/team leader. This is consistent with the concept of integrating the project into the planning office described in paragraph 131; it is also consistent with recent thinking on the contribution of technical co-operation to development, particularly regarding the pre-eminent role of Governments in the management of projects[23].

134. Unless there are exceptional reasons for doing otherwise, new projects in the field of planning should be designed without a team leader/project manager: the international project personnel should be integrated into the overall institutional structure of the planning office, responsible to a senior Government (technical) official[24]. This latter person might, of course, be advised and assisted by an international staff member of the project, but whilst the direction of the work of the project would be shared, the responsibility would be that of the Government official.

135. The degree of integration of a project into the planning office is partly a function of the size of the international team. On the one hand, the team has to be of a certain minimum size so as to make a maximum contribution within a short period of time. On the other hand, Governments are naturally reluctant to see a sensitive department like the planning office dominated by foreigners. Generally Governments request relatively small teams (perhaps 3-5 international staff), but this probably means, in turn, that technical co-operation will continue to be needed for a longer period.

23/ See The Role of UNDP in World Development, DP/114, ('New Dimensions'); JIU Report on the Role of Experts in Development Co-operation (DP/334); and the decisions of the UNDP Governing Council on these documents at its 20th and 25th sessions, respectively.

24/ The "exceptional reasons" would pertain to those situations of UNDP technical co-operation with a planning office that had only recently been established. In such cases, a project manager should provide guidance and co-ordination on behalf of his counterpart who would most likely be the senior national official heading the planning office. But in no cases should the presence of the project manager and other international staff lead to an isolated group within the planning office.

136. Another important factor affecting the level of integration of external experts with the national teams (and, therefore, their possibilities of performing on-the-job training through working together) is the professional standards of the national staff. Due to a number of factors (prior training, wage policy, rate of turnover) discussed elsewhere, it happens sometimes that the national staff lack the minimum of knowledge and experience necessary to stimulate a good working dialogue between themselves and the international staff. In one case, for example, an expert organized a meeting to discuss a proposal on balance of payments strategy with several junior members of the global department of the planning agency concerned, only to discover that most of them were totally unfamiliar with basic concepts of balance-of-payments accounts. This fact did, of course, frustrate the attainment of the purpose of the meeting and any on-the-job training that might have otherwise been involved. A similar lack of knowledge is often encountered in the fields of statistics, the theory of development, the choice of policy instruments, etc., and it is difficult for an expert to cover such basic topics systematically while doing his job: they should, preferably be the subject of formal training.

137. This emphasizes the point that formal training should be seen, in part, as a means for facilitating in-service training and, therefore, complementary to it. Though several forms of training have been identified above (paragraph 114) this was done for analytical purposes only. It does not imply that the different kinds of training should be used independently of each other, or in competition. Rather, the needs of training should be met by a comprehensive and integrated approach, taking full advantage of all the possibilities available, and supportive of the essential thrust of the project. This implies, for example, that the international staff should contribute to the design of the formal training - the choice of fellows and their training institutions, the selection of study tours, and the preparation of material for in-country courses. It also suggests that projects should help planning agencies in developing a continuing capability for carrying out training programmes (by drawing up appropriate training materials and preparing trainers), and more generally in designing appropriate personnel policies.

138. It is often thought that the process of skill transfer and on-the-job training is carried out most effectively by international staff holding non-executive, or advisory posts. There were several OPAS personnel working on some of the forty-three projects reviewed, but there were no such personnel on any of the projects visited by the field missions. On these projects, however, even though all the international staff were occupying purely advisory posts, there were in effect a number who had de facto, executive responsibilities: this was particularly the case of projects in Africa, where as noted elsewhere, the planning agencies are severely constrained by the lack of trained manpower.

139. There are two views on the desirability of either advisory or executive personnel: the first is that international staff, occupying established posts in the administrative hierarchy, can more effectively impart their knowledge and skills as they would be fully integrated into the planning office. The other view, as cited above, is that international personnel, an expensive and scarce commodity, should avoid regular executive responsibilities so as to be able to concentrate fully on upgrading the know-how of the national staff and strengthening

the capacity of the planning office.

140. In fact, however, there appeared to be no evidence that the efficiency of the process of skill transfer was affected by the formal description of the international staff, whether OPAS or advisory. The effectiveness of on-the-job training was much more a function of how the technical co-operation project was designed, and on the manner in which the international staff conceived and carried out their responsibilities.

141. In addition to the factors mentioned above, rapid turnover, and occasionally conspicuous absence of, national staff inevitably adversely affected efforts at on-the-job training.25/ It was a problem of varying severity in nearly all projects. Aside from the overall manpower shortage in several countries, especially in Africa, there seem to be two prinicipal causes for this. First, salaries and fringe benefits are often higher and more attractive in the parastatal and private sectors than in the civil service. And, second, given the frequently peripheral role of the planning agency within a country's decision-making process, professional positions are often more interesting and prestigious elsewhere in the civil services. The result of all this is that, even in cases where a technical assistance project achieved significant in-service training, the lasting effects of this in the planning agency were often severely limited by the departure from the agency of the staff so trained. However, it must be accepted that planners do have high job mobility. Even though trained personnel may leave the planning agency, they will be using their skills and knowledge in responsible positions elsewhere in the public service or in the private sector. This should be taken into account when assessing the benefits of training.

142. The way in which international and national staff view their respective roles also affects the possibilities for in-service training. Many experts, for example, seemed to feel that they were under some pressure from their Executing Agencies and/or the planning agencies' higher authorities to produce tangible results of advisory and executive work rather than the more intangible effects of imparting knowledge to national staff. Some experts simply preferred to work more independently than others and may be less interested in or skilled at training. Nevertheless, national staff, particularly a planning agency's higher authorities, often feel conflicting demands between taking full advantage of the presence of international project personnel to obtain the maximum in immediate advisory and executive services from them and using their presence to contribute to the longer-term goal of staff development. Since fulfilling the latter tends to produce less evident results in the short-term, the former usually takes precedence.

25/ Turnover of international staff was discussed in paragraph 48. However, the evidence is uncertain that the length of an international expert's stay determines the effectiveness of in-service training; one project (in Ecuador) implemented largely through short-term consultants achieved very considerable in-service training.

143. Much of the work of the planning agencies follows a cyclical pattern, whether a five year cycle in the case of the preparation of a medium-term plan or an annual cycle in the case of participating in the development budget discussions. Use might be made of the relatively slack period in the cycle to carry out intensive training courses, as follows.

144. A technical co-operation project is often requested only after a Government decides that it wishes to prepare a development plan; in these circumstances, it is only natural that, in practice, the assistance requested is of the direct support type, irrespective of the usual references to institution-building in the project document. Both the international and national staff are inevitably too preoccupied with the process of preparing the plan to be able to devote much if any attention to training courses. But once the process of plan or budget preparation is over, Governments sometimes decide to reduce the number of international staff. If UNDP and the Executing Agencies intend to promote in-service training, and in-country courses, as an important component in strengthening planning agencies, they may wish to suggest to Governments that the scale of assistance be maintained and that the relatively greater availability of experts' time be devoted to training. In any event the international staff should discuss all aspects of their assignments with the national staff, providing a theoretical and conceptual background to the actual work of the planning agency, and drawing upon international experience as appropriate.

145. The over-all conclusions of the preceding paragraphs are that on-the-job training was viewed as secondary to the projects' advisory and executive activities, in spite of most of the projects' basic objective of institution-building, and this was due to several factors, some internal to the project others external.

(c) Institutions for the training of planners

146. One of the projects visited during the course of the study was a fully-fledged training institution devoted entirely to the training and upgrading of the planners in the Government service. As space permitted, planners from neighbouring countries were also admitted. Its initial justification lay in the heavy demand of the public sector for better trained economists and planners and in fact nearly 2,000 personnel passed through the institute during the period of UNDP-assistance. To that extent, the technical co-operation was very useful. It was more difficult, however, to create an entirely self-reliant permanent institution for the training of planners.

2. Other forms of institution-building

147. Formal and in-service training represented the most common form of support for institution-building, but some projects contributed in other ways as well. In fact, outside of the area of training there is much that can be done through technical co-operation in helping Governments strengthen the planning agencies. For example, a comprehensive approach to institution-building might be taken when designing projects in the field of planning, so that the problems and obstacles to more effective institution-building (e.g. concerning conditions of service of the national staff) are brought to the attention of Governments. It does not necessarily follow that Governments will request technical co-operation to help tackle these obstacles, but at least a comprehensive approach to developing appropriate structures and processes for planning will be helpful to Governments

...

in their own efforts to strengthen planning. In any event, UNDP-assisted projects could well include advice on institutional changes amongst the major outputs of institution-building projects. For example, personnel policies for planning agencies need to be introduced, both to attract and retain skilled planners and to ensure their supply at the required level.

148. This was done in a number of projects. Some projects made recommendations for institutional changes in the planning machinery, including the role and functions of planning in the decision-making process. Some examples were provided in paragraph 95 but here it is relevant to mention that in one such project the institutional changes suggested by the project were very important in strengthening the planning agency and were virtually the only institution-building effect of the project. Other projects were effective in institution-building through advising on the creation of new state institutions. In Liberia, Sudan and Zambia, the international staff provided assistance to the higher authorities of the planning offices in determining the appropriate internal organization of the planning offices.

149. In several projects, the staff were helpful in devising ways and means of attracting staff to the planning offices and retaining them when recruited. In Zambia, for example, the international project staff participated in a course of lectures at the University of Zambia, Lusaka, which aroused considerable interest. Also in Zambia, the project staff, assisted by the staff of the UNDP Regional Representative's office, constituted a working group to suggest measures for the Zambianization of the planning office. In Senegal, the project staff contributed to drawing up a civil service statute for planners, which is shortly to be promulgated, offering special terms and conditions of service to planners in government service.

150. Some of the planning agencies assisted by UNDP-financed projects would have liked to introduce special terms and conditions of service for their staff, in order to attract and retain qualified and motivated staff. Invariably, however, the public service departments and/or the Ministries of Finance resented this, being unwilling to make a particular example of planners when other specialised services in Governments could demand the same favourable treatment. A special career structure for economists and planners, more rapid promotion, or "topping up" of particular posts are alternative means to the same end successfully applied in some countries. The long-term solution to weak planning agencies must be sought, however, in the variety of measures described in this report (clarification of the role and functions of planning, more effective training programmes, better use of technical co-operation) rather than in trying to make a special case for planners.

3. Overall impact of institution-building activities

151. The general conclusion of the study is that only little progress has been made in raising the levels of self-reliance in the central planning agencies assisted by UNDP. There were four principal reasons for this. First, institution-building in the area of planning is a long-term process, extending over the life of several successive UNDP-assisted projects: projects were too ambitious in expecting that self-reliance could be attained over a short period. Second, Governments not always accord the importance and priority to planning, and take the necessary measures to strengthen the planning agencies. Third, the conception, design and

implementation of UNDP-assisted projects were not necessarily conducive to institution-building. And fourth, there were no specific staff development programmes as an integral part of projects. It follows, therefore, that more vigorous efforts will be required by governments and the United Nations system if UNDP technical co-operation is to lead effectively to self-reliance in the foreseeable future. The next section of this report presents the recommendations of the study on how better UNDP-assisted projects might contribute to the attainment of self-reliance in the field of development planning.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

152. This section of the report will bring together the main findings and conclusions of the study, and will end with a set of general as well as specific recommendations regarding the design and implementation of UNDP-assisted projects in the field of comprehensive planning. The purpose of the study was to carry out an assessment of the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of UNDP technical co-operation for the establishment of self-reliant planning agencies with a view to examining the relevance of technical co-operation activities in this field and to suggesting ways of making them more effective and efficient. The study, which was conducted with the active participation of the two main Executing Agencies - the United Nations and the World Bank - was carried out over the period early 1977 - mid-1978 and comprised three stages - desk review, field missions, and synthesis of findings.

153. The conclusions and recommendations of the study will form the basis of a Programme Note on UNDP technical co-operation in economic and social planning to be issued to UNDP staff, and the staff of the concerned Executing Agencies. Based on the study, the Note will provide more detailed and concrete guidance of an operational nature on various aspects of the design and implementation of planning projects.

A. Findings and Conclusions

154. The study began with a quantitative analysis of all UNDP-assisted planning projects. As of June 1976, UNDP was supporting 518 projects in 110 countries and territories in the field of economic and social planning, at a cost to UNDP of $113.9 million. This represents 6.4 per cent in terms of the numbers and 5.1 per cent in terms of the value of the assistance approved at that date, a somewhat smaller proportion than the published data would suggest. However, there is some indication that this proportion may have marginally increased in the immediate past, a reflection most probably of the higher priority attached by governments to planning projects at the time of severe retrenchment in other components of the UNDP programme during the financial crisis in 1976-1977.

155. Much (over 60 per cent) of the value of UNDP assistance in the field of planning is located in countries with a per capita income of less than $400. About one-third of the value of all projects are found in Africa (with a concentration in comprehensive planning), 29 per cent in Latin America (concentrated in sectoral planning and subregional integration planning) and the remainder equally

distributed between the regions of Asia and the Pacific, and Europe, Mediterranean and the Middle East.

156. The broad category of sectoral planning receives the largest amount of UNDP resources in aggregate terms spread around several different kinds of sectoral planning. Comprehensive planning is, however, the single most important type of planning currently supported by UNDP, followed by assistance in planning to the sub-regional integration movements, the regional institutes for planning and regional (subnational) planning.

157. Almost 60 per cent of the value and 20 per cent of the number of planning projects are considered to contribute to institution-building, nearly all the rest being direct support (40 per cent of the value and 60 per cent of the number) and direct training projects. UNDP-assisted planning projects are executed by 12 international organizations: the majority by the United Nations (39 per cent) followed by UNDP (14 per cent), IBRD (13 per cent), and the remainder by the specialized agencies which execute sectoral planning projects.

158. Given the importance of comprehensive planning, and the scale of the UNDP contribution to it, the study concentrated on institution-building projects in this particular field of planning. Through desk reviews and field missions, information was gathered regarding the type of comprehensive planning being carried out on the projects assisted by UNDP. In the great majority of cases, the central planning agencies conceived of planning essentially as a broad framework within which were spelt out the longer term trends and directions of general policies. Although planning covered both the public and private sectors, great emphasis was placed, for operational purposes, on the public sector, including state enterprises: the plans, and planning, were seldom disaggregated to the industry or plant level except the listing of major public projects in development plans. Since planning had a medium long-term horizon, annual and operational planning were rarely practised: the annual budgetary process and ad hoc decisions - in which the planning office was one voice among many - remained the main instruments for the allocation of resources and the broad delineation of policies and strategies. Furthermore, some major issues appeared to be neglected in a number of cases, whether as a general omission in a large number of projects in the case of the planning of the external sector or planning for science and technology or specific issues in some projects, such as fiscal discipline or control. There were weak relationships between the central planning office and other parts of governments (whether the executive departments, the regional development organizations, or the ministries concerned with overall economic decision-making) leading to the relative isolation of the planning office in the overall administrative structure.

159. For all these reasons, as Section C discussed, the contribution of the UNDP-assisted projects to the building up of techniques and know-how in planning tended to vary greatly with the overall role and status of planning in the process of decision-making. The planning agencies - the subject of UNDP co-operation - were more concerned with formal planning methodologies and the construction of a medium-term macro-economic framework, rather than the identification and formulation of programmes and policy packages in specific areas. An important

contribution of a majority of the projects was precisely in this area - namely their assistance in the process of medium-term plan preparation, review and monitoring: over half of the eleven projects visited were indispensable to the governments at the critical moment of plan formulation. A less notable contribution was made in other aspects of macro-planning - for example, annual planning - and in such areas as sectoral and regional planning and project preparation.

160. The main focus of the study was UNDP support for the building up of an institutional capability for comprehensive planning at the national level. To this end, the study sought to examine the extent to which UNDP co-operation has been instrumental in developing self-reliance, as defined in paragraph 110. The principal finding and conclusion of the study is that institution-building is proceeding at too slow a pace[26]; that the objectives established in the project documents for this purpose were not attained; and that more vigorous efforts will be required of governments and the United Nations system if UNDP technical co-operation is to lead to self-reliance in the foreseeable future.

161. The main reasons for the relatively slow progress in institution-building may be briefly listed.

(a) Building up a self-reliant capability for planning is a process requiring a much longer time dimension than hitherto supposed: it is certainly not something that can be attained in the lifetime of one or two typical UNDP-assisted projects, nor is it realistic to imagine an effective and efficient planning office aside from a simultaneous strengthening of public administration in general. Experience would suggest that it takes at least a decade or more.

(b) The most important necessary conditions which enable technical co-operation to be effective are a government's commitment and support for planning. Planning provides governments with a framework and a tool for making and implementing decisions, but human and financial resources have to be committed by governments in order to strengthen the technical capacity of its planning agencies. If this is not done, technical co-operation, however well designed and efficiently executed, can have little real effect. In the projects examined during the study, governments have not assigned priority to making the central planning agency the focal point in decision-making; this coupled with problems and delays in technical co-operation itself inevitably lengthened the process of institution-building.

(c) The process of staff development was not regarded as the central issue either in the design or in the implementation of

26/ To achieve self-reliance, it is anticipated that UNDP co-operation will continue to be required after the present phase, in virtually all of the projects visited during the course of the study.

UNDP-assisted projects. Project documents were confined generally to a description of the range of planning activities to be carried out: the precise measures for institution-building, particularly a well organized and structured training programme, were rarely if at all included. Projects were sometimes designed without a full and careful analysis of the precise requirements: for technical co-operation; the training activities, an essential ingredient of institution-building, were with some exceptions often undertaken outside of the main thrust of the project. The emphasis on the carrying out of particular planning activities, namely advisory and executive functions, in contrast to contributing to institution-building, may have reflected the practical realities of the moment, including perhaps the preferences of the international project staff. But the higher value placed on the immediate issues probably adversely affected efforts at creating a self-reliant planning capability.

162. The study also reviewed the process aspects of project implementation. Although the record of delivery of the UNDP-financed components reviewed was acceptable, there were some difficulties in the recruitment of the international staff. Delays were experienced in several projects, particularly in fielding the entire complement of international staff; the heavy turnover of the staff in some projects was also very costly. A few projects relied extensively on short-term consultants in contrast to resident experts, a trend towards greater self-reliance that should accelerate as countries develop their capacities for planning. Furthermore, several governments nominated candidates for specific posts, a process that led to more rapid, efficient recruitment. Subcontracting was used in a few cases and the evidence appeared to suggest that the possibly faster delivery of personnel was not sufficiently attractive to justify the higher costs, at least in the case of institution-building projects. In contrast to the expert component, for which the actual cost was 50 per cent higher than the originally estimated cost (a reflection of both the increase in the duration and size of projects and of rising costs), only 62 per cent of the monetary value of the training component was implemented. Given the already small proportion of training in the total planned cost of the projects, the low implementation rate must have adversely affected staff development; it also indicated a shift away from formal training towards more advisory and executive activities during project implementation.

163. The implementation of government contributions to the projects, in terms of the provision of qualified national staff varied considerably. The scarcity and/or rapid turnover of national staff was a major factor in a number of projects, particularly in Africa. Countries with a more developed educational base and less severe overall manpower shortages, were generally better able to provide national staff. In general, however, the shortage and turnover of national staff endangered the purpose of the project's contributions to institution-building and staff development.

B. On improving the effectiveness and efficiency of UNDP-financed technical co-operation in development planning - a summary of recommendations

164. The main recommendations of the study fall into two main groups - those that are directed towards improving the effectiveness of the contribution of UNDP-financed technical co-operation to the process of institution-building; and those that concern the efficiency of project execution.

(a) Institution-building

165. Institution-building in the field of planning is a long process. Whilst technical co-operation can make a contribution to this process, the governments' commitment and support for planning remains, however, the most necessary condition for successful institution-building. There is a need to strengthen the status of planning as an effective tool of decision-making. A greater emphasis on more operational annual planning, including an accent on problem-solving, is likely to increase the importance of planning. And technical co-operation is more likely to lead to strong self-reliant planning agencies when planning itself plays a central role in the process of decision-making. But institution-building takes at least a decade or more, and governments and UNDP should be aware of the resources that may be required for a considerable period of time.

(i) Project design

166. Technical co-operation in development planning should be viewed as a self-liquidating activity leading to self-reliance, in the sense defined in paragraph 110. Its aim should be to develop certain skills in the various areas of planning, given the estimated duration of the project. The exact composition of the skill-mix in the central planning agency will depend on several factors, such as the type of planning to be introduced and/or strengthened, including its level of disaggregation; the desirable structure of the machinery for planning, including the extent of centralization or decentralization; and of course the particular problems and prospects of development, given the structure of the economy and the socio-economic policies of the government.

167. All these factors will vary from country to country, but they should all be analysed during the course of project design in order to determine the type, level and numbers of skills that should be developed in the different areas of planning (general planning, project appraisal, forecasting, etc.). Thus, project design should be viewed essentially as a process of manpower planning at the institutional level. And project outputs should be defined not only in terms of specific planning functions, but also and more importantly in terms of the specific numbers of planners required in the different areas, and in the other measures required for developing an institutional capability for planning.

168. Whilst UNDP-assisted projects should emphasize the transer of knowledge and skills from international to national staff, they should not be regarded solely as a means of training. Advisory and executive functions and staff development constitute the two components of a UNDP-assisted project in planning with each supporting the other: the design of projects should reflect the distinct characteristics of each and their interdependency.

169. To the extent possible, and particularly in the case of projects for which large-scale assistance is contemplated, the manpower planning exercise should encompass all the units of the planning machinery (including sector and regional planning, as appropriate). Assistance to the central planning agency should take into account the planning capabilities of the other government departments, and any technical assistance that might be provided simultaneously to these departments should be co-ordinated with co-operation to the central planning agency. Opportunities should be taken to develop the capacity of the planning machinery as a whole, in which case, there might be two or more formally designated government co-operating agencies in addition to the central planning agency.

170. A more rigorous and careful design of projects will require additional resources. Extensive preparatory work may be needed, which should most probably be financed from the country IPF. In those cases where it is not possible to carry out the process of project design within a relatively short period of time, project activities should start with preparatory assistance by fielding a general economist/planner for a few months to assist governments in drawing up a project document for subsequent full-scale assistance.

(ii) Training and staff development

171. The methods of institution-building in planning projects consist mainly of formal and in-service training, the former comprising fellowships to attend courses or seminars or undertake study tours abroad and the latter in-country workshops and on-the-job training. It has been noted in this report that the formal training component of a planning project is a small proportion of the project's estimated cost and tends to be deficiently implemented both quantitatively and qualitatively.

172. In order for formal training to assume a useful role in institution-building, it must be designed and implemented as a function of the identification of skill requirements and a project's intended contribution to fulfilling them, as mentioned in paragraph 164. Project documents should invariably contain a well organised and structured training programme, with the different elements of such programmes mutually supportive of each other and integrated into the project. Once the numbers of planners to be trained in each planning area have been specified, the best way of accomplishing this should be determined. If formal training is deemed suitable, the most appropriate methods for this - fellowships abroad and/or in-country courses or seminars - should be identified.

173. Once again, a government's commitment to making technical co-operation in planning effective is critical: it must be ensured that trainees are of appropriate educational background and suitably placed in the planning agency or agencies to benefit from the training specified. Furthermore, arrangements should be made to ensure that returned fellows and former trainees are actually employed in the planning agency or agencies in positions where they can apply their training. The practice of formal in-country courses or seminars should be further developed, and executing agencies should assist in preparing curricula and in teaching methods for such courses. A list of professional training institutions

capable of carrying out in-country courses should be drawn up, for subsequent information of governments and Resident Representatives; and resources should be provided to established institutions (for example, the regional institutes for planning) for carrying out formal in-country training.

174. In-service training, or that which occurs through the regular working relations between international and national personnel, has tended to be seriously underemphasized in both project design and implementation and should be the single most important contribution to skill transfer. The extensiveness and usefulness of this mode of training depend on governments, executing agencies and the international and national staffs themselves.

175. A variety of steps to improve the effectiveness of on-the-job training is possible. First, governments should manifest sufficient support to the planning agencies so as to retain qualified planners for extended periods of time; the typically rapid turnover of professional staff in planning agencies often negates the institution-building effects of in-service training, as noted above. In addition, if governments want international staff to devote considerable time and effort to in-service training, they must not allow experts to feel that only their services as technical advisers and executives are valued. Second, executing agencies should train the international staff in the techniques of informal training, and should assist in the development of suitable course material. They should also make it clear that their contributions in this field are as valued as their production of technical reports and plans. Third, depending on the type and size of the formal and informal training programme in the project, an expert in training should be included amongst the international staff; or alternatively one of the experts should be assigned responsibility for overseeing the training programme. Fourth, much of the work of planning offices is seasonal, either in a five-year cycle (the preparation of a medium-term plan) or in an annual cycle (particularly participating in development budget discussions). Ad hoc training sessions, and intensive on-the-job training might be heavily emphasized during the trough of a typical cycle with the skills so developed to be utilized by the national staff at the subsequent peak of intensive planning work. Fifth, the international staff should be effectively integrated into the hierarchy of the planning agency. The working relations between the national and international staff should be such that both sides participate actively in the in-service transfer of skills and expertise.

176. With respect to the latter recommendations, a Framework for the Effective Participation of National and International Staff should be drawn up, as already required[27]; the international staff should have sufficient pedagogical experience and know-how to transfer their skills to the national staff; projects should be designed, unless there are exceptional reasons otherwise, without a team leader/project manager, and the international staff should work under the overall supervision of the senior government (technical) official. This latter person might of course be advised by an international staff member of the project, but whilst the direction of the work of the project would be shared, the responsibility would rest with the government official.

27/ UNDP Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 3400, Subsection 3437.

(b) Efficiency of project execution

177. Although good project design is a necessary condition for many aspects of efficient project execution, the following proposals are made to improve the delivery of the UNDP-financed component of projects, particularly the recruitment of the international staff. Whilst the study has identified a number of specific areas in which improvements might be made, it should be noted that some of the following recommendations apply in equal measure to UNDP-assisted projects in other fields of activity.

178. There are several steps that might be taken to improve the process of recruitment and clearance by governments. First, an attempt should be made to simplify and accelerate UN recruitment procedures. It is to be hoped that placing TARS within the recently established Department of Technical Co-operation for Development will facilitate this. To help TARS in its work, the earliest possible submission of job descriptions to it is to be strongly endorsed: an earlier indication of likely future requests would also help the recruitment process. Greater efforts should be made to recruit, brief and field the international staff as a team. Second, governments should be strongly encouraged to make decisions on candidates quickly. Third, the pre-nomination of known candidates by governments, project managers, etc., should be welcomed and encouraged. For each post, governments should be asked whether they wish to make nominations. If so, such proposals should be welcomed, and candidates should be evaluated and processed for recruitment with the minimum of delay. If the government has no candidates to recommend, then the normal machinery for recruitment would be utilized. Fourth, and complementary to existing recruitment procedures, advertising in professional journals might broaden the potential list of candidates, and interviews would provide a better guarantee of quality and the personal attributes so essential in the sensitive policy area of development planning: though this would increase the cost of recruitment, the benefits in terms of better quality and less turnover of staff would be considerable. Fifth, the area of development planning is particularly appropriate for technical co-operation among developing countries, and planning offices could well exchange personnel through twinning arrangements. Finally, there is a growing need for short-term specialized consultants, and the United Nations system should improve its operational efficiency in responding to requests of governments for services of this kind. A publicized roster or panel (such as presently exists for interregional advisers) of planners available at little notice for short-term missions would be a step in this direction.

179. The study has also identified a number of other measures that might be taken to improve the efficiency of project execution. First, when the UNDP-financed project is only one of several technical assistance projects to planning in a country, close co-ordination with the other projects should be ensured, with the government as principal co-ordinator. Second, when experts from more than one UN-system agency are to be recruited for a single UNDP-financed project, they should be seconded to a principal executing agency which will assume responsibility for the entire project. Third, the United Nations system's regional institutes for planning could be used to assist planning projects by providing consultants and by organizing courses and seninars, to the extent that this is compatible with the technical and administrative capabilities of the institutes in question. Fourth,

given the higher cost of implementing projects through subcontracts rather than by direct execution, and the generally more developed facilities for training, monitoring and backstopping within the United Nations system, subcontracting of planning projects should generally be limited to projects which consist largely of specific direct-support activities. Institution-building projects should be executed by direct recruitment. Finally, each project should strike a balance between resident staff and short-term consultants, the latter being particularly appropriate when relatively well-developed planning agencies require assistance for specific tasks.

(c) Backstopping and monitoring

180. Backstopping, namely the provision of substantive support from Headquarters and the monitoring of implementation, is essential to ensure effective and efficient project execution. While these activities seem to have been undertaken fairly satisfactorily in the planning projects reviewed, there are a few areas where improvements could be made. In the case of backstopping, a more systematic provision of technical material on planning techniques and experience to project personnel is to be encouraged: the research role recently assigned to DPAS, the department in the UN secretariat responsible for substantive support of planning projects will facilitate the exchange of Headquarters analysis with field experience.

181. The new research and analysis function might also include an examination of new approaches to planning, more appropriate to conditions in many of the developing countries. For example, there might be a review of the ways and means to strengthen annual operational planning, including fiscal discipline; to introduce the planning of the external sector; to develop a stronger capability for project preparation and appraisal; and to explore alternative approaches to the planning of hitherto neglected regions and low-income groups. Planning would thus assume a more operational and problem-oriented character, thereby enhancing the status and importance of the central planning agency and increasing the impact of technical co-operation.

182. The enhanced role for DPAS should also mean that it, and UNDP, can use more systematically its accumulated experience when designing new projects in the field of planning. Furthermore, the rigorous approach to project design suggested in this report, and the contribution of projects to staff development, will enhance the role and importance of substantive backstopping.

183. In the case of administrative and programme monitoring, greater care should be placed on the maintenance of complete and systematically organized project files both in the field and at headquarters. Fully completed project progress reports should be submitted to Executing Agencies and to UNDP headquarters at the required intervals.

184. Accurate and timely information on the scale and character of UNDP-financed technical co-operation in development planning is essential for efficient management. The present system for classifying planning projects should be reformed in order to bring forward accurate data on the extent to which UNDP is currently financing planning projects.

(d) Summary list of main recommendations, with organizations responsible for follow-up

185.		Para. No.	Organizations responsible
1.	Preparation of Programme Note	153	UNDP in consultation with Executing Agencies
2.	Institute improvements in project design		Governments and Executing Agencies in association with UNDP
	- manpower planning at institution level, and specification of outputs of projects in terms of skilled personnel	43-44; 166-169	"
	- draw up comprehensive training programme	137, 172	"
	- integrate international staff into hierarchy of planning office	134-136; 175-176	"
	- better co-ordination amongst all UNDP-assisted projects in planning in given country	64-67, 179	"
3.	To improve effectiveness of measures for staff development and training		Governments, Executing Agencies
	- carry out country-level formal training courses on specific topics of planning	123-125; 173	"
	- Executing Agencies to prepare list of training institutions to carry out country training courses	125; 173	"
	- better use of fellowships including government bonding of fellows	119-122; 173	"
	- Executing Agencies to develop training material for use in informal workshops, and to train international staff in pedagogical techniques	128; 175	"
	- projects to provide assistance to develop capacity to carry out training programmes	137; 175	"

		Para. No.	Organizations responsible
	- provide intensive training during slack period of planning cycle	143-144; 175	Governments, Executing Agencies
4.	Governments to introduce appropriate personnel policies to attract and retain staff	141; 150; 175	Governments
5.	Institution-building projects should in principle be executed by direct recruitment	56; 179	Governments, Executing Agencies, UNDP
6.	In the area of recruitment of international staff		
	- government nomination of candidates	54-55; 178	Governments
	- earliest submission of job description	55; 178	Executing Agency, including personnel recruitment service
	- interviewing of candidates	53; 55; 178	"
	- secondment to Executing Agency	64-65; 179	"
	- improve efficiency in recruitment of short-term consultants	49-50; 178	"
7.	Strengthening of substantive backstopping		
	- cross-fertilization of experience	62-63; 180-182	DPAS/DTCD; United Nations PAD/IRD World Bank
	- new methods of planning	76; 181	" "
8.	Planning is an area for the promotion of technical co-operation among developing countries	51; 55; 178	UNDP
	- more effective use of the regional institutes for planning in support of country level technical co-operation	66-67; 179	UNDP; Executing Agencies
9.	Improvement of statistics of UNDP technical co-operation in planning	8; 184	UNDP

Annex I LIST OF PROJECTS REVIEWED AND VISITED [a/]

	Title of the project, and latest estimate of UNDP contribution	Executing Agency
Africa		
Benin	Planning of Economic and Social Development - BEN/69/009 ($526,401)	United Nations
	Central Planning Bureau - BEN/72/017 ($319,332)	United Nations
Central African Empire	Planning - CAF/72/004 ($421,841)	United Nations
Chad	Economic Planning Team - CHD/68/014 ($635,749)	United Nations
	Strengthening of Economic and Social Planning Services - CHD/74/006 ($273,292)	United Nations
Ethiopia	Assistance in Development Planning (Phase II) - ETH/73/011 ($730,982)	World Bank
Gambia	Strengthening of Economic Planning - GAM/75/012 ($374,576)	United Nations
Ivory Coast	Economic and Social Planning - IVC/73/010 ($204,500)	UNDP
Liberia	Assistance to the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs - LIR/74/001* ($347,030)	World Bank
Mauritania	Assistance in Economic Planning - MAU/71/511 ($536,462)	United Nations
Rwanda	Development Administration - RWA/ED/1311	United Nations
	Development Administration - RWA/74/005* ($653,215)	United Nations
Senegal	Assistance in Development Planning and its Regionalization - SEN/71/525* ($1,243,696)	United Nations

a/ List of projects includes those on-going and recently completed at time of review.

* Projects and countries visited by field missions.

	Title of the project	Executing Agency
Africa (cont'd.)		
Sierra Leone	Assistance in Development Planning - SIL/70/510 ($1,247,865)	United Nations
	Assistance in Development Planning and Plan Implementation - SIL/75/011 ($886,566)	United Nations
Swaziland	Chief Economic Planning Adviser - SWA/75/008 ($172,452)	World Bank
Uganda	Economic Programming and Projections (Economic Planning) - UGA/68/002 ($331,202)	United Nations
	Economic Planning - UGA/75/020 ($623,750)	World Bank
United Republic of Tanzania	Assistance in Development Planning - URT/75/005 ($131,040)	United Nations
Zaire	Assistance in Development Planning and Training - ZAI/74/005 ($1,237,435)	World Bank
Zambia	Assistance to the Development Planning Division - ZAM/72/012* ($1,096,015)	United Nations
Arab States		
Iraq	Assistance in Development Planning and Execution (Phase I) - IRQ/65/507 and (Phase II) - IRQ/71/540 ($447,230)	United Nations
Jordan	Training of Economic Development Planners and Strengthening of Planning Machinery - JOR/71/534 ($707,007)	World Bank
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Economic Planning - LIB/70/002 ($496,238)	United Nations
Sudan	Strengthening of Planning Organization and Training of Personnel in Planning - SUD/72/030* ($1,120,750)	World Bank
Syrian Arab Republic	Planning Institute for Economic and Social Development - SYR/024 and SYR/71/549* ($644,810)	United Nations

	Title of the project	Executing Agency
Asia and Pacific		
Afghanistan	Strengthening the Government Capability in Planning and Implementation (Phase I) - AFG/75/021 ($419,400)	United Nations
Iran	Planning Institute - IRA/75/009 ($115,443)	United Nations
Papua New Guinea	Strengthening National Planning - PNG/74/003 ($227,263)	United Nations
Republic of Korea	Assistance in Development Planning - ROK/75/014* ($326,704)	World Bank
Sri Lanka	In-Service Training Programme for Development Planning - SRL/74/065* ($545,750)	United Nations
Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands	Assistance in Development Planning and Plan Implementation - TTP/75/001 ($220,237)	United Nations
Samoa	Upgrading of Development Planning in Samoa - WES/72/006 ($121,225)	United Nations
Latin America		
Costa Rica	Strengthening the System of National Planning - COS/72/028 and COS/73/010* ($447,355)	United Nations
Dominican Republic	Planning Development Project - DOM/73/010 ($359,904)	United Nations
Ecuador	Operational Planning - ECU/74/004* ($284,814)	United Nations
El Salvador	Strengthening the system of planning - ELS/74/017 ($297,855)	United Nations
Honduras	National Development Plan -HON/73/001 and HON/76/001* ($223,520)	United Nations
Peru	Economic and Social Planning - PER/72/003 ($410,234)	United Nations

Annex II - Sample copy of the Project Evaluation Questionnaire
(Completed by UNDP Resident Representatives for the 43 projects reviewed)

A. PROJECT PROFILE

Country:

Project No:

Title:

Sub-sector (code):

Functional Type:

Executing Agency:

Counterpart Agency:

Date Preparatory Assistance approved:

Date full project approved:

Original Proposed Starting Date:

Actual date of start of Field Work:

Original Estimated Date of Completion of Field Work:

Actual or latest estimated Date of Completion of Field Work:

Original Proposed UNDP Contribution (including cost-sharing): $

Original Proposed Government Counterpart Contribution:

(i) Cash (amount in local currency):
(ii) Cost sharing: ($)
(iii) Contribution in kind: ($ equivalent)

B. DOCUMENTATION ON FILE

(i) Project documentation

Item	Date(s)
Resident Representative Appraisal	
Bureau Appraisal	
TAD Appraisal	
Pre-implementation Report(s)	
Project Manager's Progress Report(s)	
Ad hoc Agency reports and substantive comments	
Ad hoc Reports by Resident Representative	
Tripartite Review Report(s)	
Evaluation and Other Mission Reports	
Reports of individual experts	
Mid-term Review Report	
Technical Report(s)	
Agency Terminal Report	
Terminal Assessment Report	

(ii) Background documentation

1. Material on structure and characteristics of the economy

2. Material on recent performance of the economy

3. Material on the planning system

4. Material on plan implementation

C. FINANCIAL DATA

Original Proposed UNDP Contribution

	m/m	$
Experts:		
Sub-contract:		
Training:		
Equipment:		
Miscellaneous:		
Total	____	_____

Original Proposed Government Counterpart Contribution in Kind

	m/m	Local currency
Personnel:		
Training:		
Equipment:		
Miscellaneous:		
Total	____	_____

Latest estimate of UNDP Contribution

	m/m	$
Experts:		
Sub-contract:		
Training:		
Equipment:		
Miscellaneous:		
Total	_____	_____
	=====	=======

Latest estimate of Government Counterpart Contribution in kind

	m/m	Local currency
Personnel:		
Training:		
Equipment:		
Miscellaneous:		
Total	_____	_____
	======	=======

Expert Posts	Original	Latest Estimate
Title	m/m	m/m

Counterpart Posts	Original	Latest Estimate
Title	m/m	m/m

Major Substantive Revisions to Project

Nature	Date Approved

D. SUBSTANTIVE SUMMARY

1. Justification:

2. Development (or long-term objective):

3. Immediate Objectives:

4. Major Activities:

	Originally planned completion date	Latest estimated completion date

5. Classification of type of planning activities undertaken (provide estimate of percentage of project activity devoted to following categories):

6. Reasons for the differences in dates in 4.

7. Project difficulties:
 (a) Government
 (b) UN system

8. Related projects (UN system and others):

9. Follow-up activities